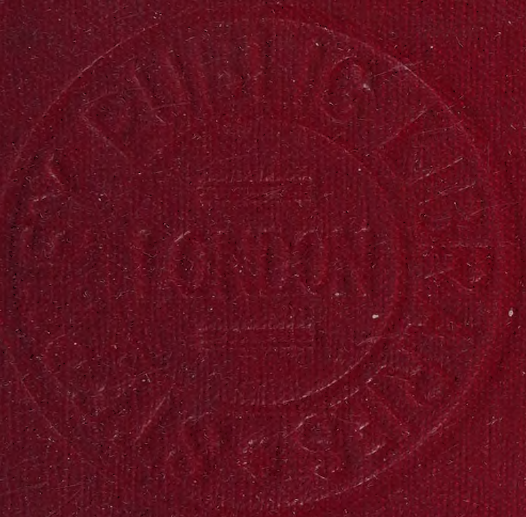
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SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC,

IN THE MIDDLE OF

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY,

CONSIDERED

IN REFERENCE TO OUR POSITION

AS A

COMMUNITY OF PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

THE PEOPLE'S PAGE "LONDON" FOR EAST

BY THE AUTHOR OF "REVERSES."

Mrs Whately.

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PREFACE.

This little volume, written for the most part under very different circumstances from the present, is offered to the public at a period, it is hoped, not unfavourable to its reception. Roused by a great national calamity, to a sense of our weakness and insufficiency in reference to physical evil, we turn the more readily, perhaps, to subjects over which we have some control;—to our own moral and religious responsibilities, and to our education for a World where the evils which now involve ourselves and our fellow-creatures in suffering and sorrow, shall have ceased.

The present national call upon our charities, seems to have caused such a general awakening, to one class, at least, of our moral duties,—to the claims of human

misery*. Persons of rank, station, and forms of faith, the most different, or even opposed to each other, have been uniting in one vast object of benevolence; and hearts long divided, are brought together by the healing influence of common sympathies. If such be the softening and chastening influence, which the calamitous events we are witnessing have produced on our minds, we are now perhaps in the best frame for attending to subjects connected with the social and domestic duties of life,—for estimating the progress we have made under the favourable circumstance of our advanced civilization, and for marking the errors which have crept into our practice.

And if some of the subjects treated of in this volume be deemed too frivolous to detain the mind at such a

* The writer, as member of an Irish Relief Committee, has had an opportunity of witnessing, and desires to record, the gratitude which has been felt in Ireland by the recipients of English bounty; (and by none more than by those whose office has been to communicate it)—a bounty which has come forth from individuals and families of all classes, not only at home, but in distant lands—many of whom, perhaps most, must have made sacrifices of their own personal comforts or pleasures, for the purpose of enabling them to alleviate distresses which they do not witness, but which they are willing to take on trust. If charity is twice blessed, the good fruits of this great calamity should be large.

period, it may be replied, that no subject, even though connected with nothing more important than the sports of our children, can justly be deemed frivolous, if it is in any way calculated to involve evil consequences.

At all events, it will not be thought an unsuitable period to claim from each other a better fulfilment of the duties to which we are pledged by our common faith; —viz. that we should not only "visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction," but, in our social and domestic life, "keep ourselves unspotted from the world."

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PART I.

ENGLISH LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE state of society throughout the civilized world, but especially in our own country, at this period of the nineteenth century, must often and deeply engage the attention of thoughtful minds, and would form a most interesting subject of inquiry and discussion in the hands of one favourably placed and endowed, both for viewing it in its various aspects and for entering on the investigation in that spirit and wisdom which would enable him to take a just view of its social and domestic relations, apart from his own immediate connection with them.

Such a view would be retrospective also; for it would involve a history of progress: and it would be most interesting to trace the influence of political events and popular commotions, of commercial transactions and

scientific discoveries, and especially of religious and educational movements, on the social and domestic manners and habits of the present age. The subject accordingly has not been altogether neglected: many lively remarks and profound views connected with it are to be found in the writings of modern essayists, historians and poets; while in some of the popular works of fiction we have lively and often faithful impressions taken off from the prominent features of our age, both in its domestic and social condition, and bold sketches made of the scenes and circumstances in which its faults and follies, its virtues and intelligence, stand out on the surface of life.

Nor has the subject been left to grave inquiry or to fictitious narrative only; our sense of the ludicrous is enlisted every week, by both pencil and pen, for the purpose of stimulating and directing attention to the passing scenes of life, to its whims and selfishness, its follies and inconsistencies, as they shift and show themselves in our rapidly advancing course.

Still, as a whole, the subject remains untouched. And there is one portion, or rather one particular view of that whole, which involves so much responsibility, and whose perplexity in detail is so generally felt, that thoughtful minds will not perhaps be unwilling to enter upon a consideration of it, in company with one whose reflections have taken this course, and to follow out an inquiry concerning the duties and defects of social and domestic life in our own country, *in reference to our position as a community of professing Christians.*

To take up such a subject indeed, without reference

to the very circumstance, viz. our religious faith, which must be supposed to affect, more than any other, all our relations to, and our intercourse with each other, would seem absolutely absurd, were we not accustomed to see them unconnected in practice. So that the influence of our religious faith on the habits and arrangements of life has scarcely been recognised in some of the disquisitions on men and manners which this age has given rise to. And yet, simply as an element in modern civilization, it could scarcely with propriety be omitted; since in every nation we are acquainted with, ancient or modern, the habits and manners of the people have ever been very much influenced by their religious worship, and often fashioned wholly upon it.

We know how entirely the domestic and social habits of the Jews were regulated by their religious institutions, even long after they ceased to exist as a theocracy. We know that the institutions of Mahomet exercised, and still exercise, a powerful influence over the habits of those who acknowledge his mission; that the same is the case with the Brahmins, and that so it has ever been with every distinct race of idolaters,—from those who, like the polished Greeks and Romans, conformed to a regular state worship, refined and elaborate in form, to those who observed the horrid rites of Phœnicia.

Nor has the influence of religion, in the corrupter forms of Christianity, been wholly of an unpractical nature; on the contrary, in proportion to the cumbrousness of its ordinances, it necessarily acts, if not indeed on the interior, at least on the surface, of social life.

Is it then in the purer forms of Christianity alone,

whose outward requisitions and ordinances are few, that no modification of the habits of social and domestic life takes place, such as we have seen worked out by the influence of a false, and also of a corrupted faith? Or may we believe that our own religious belief is acting on social and domestic life, in the very way which its divine Author intended it to act, viz. as a little leaven, which without very much changing the external appearance of things, is gradually leavening the whole mass of society as it advances in civilization, and insinuating itself more and more into our social and domestic habits? Many facts seem at first sight to lead us to such a happy conclusion: for though Christianity has always influenced individuals, and has through these, its true and happy votaries, acted upon society at large, yet it is only within less than half a century that it has begun to circulate through the whole surface of social life, and to extend over those two portions of it—the highest and the lowest—which seemed, from different causes, most inaccessible to its influences *. Whether there be really more vital religion among us than existed fifty years ago, we have no means of judging; but that there is at the present period of this nineteenth century a much more general recognition of its duties and ordinances among all ranks of the people, and that society at large professes, at least, to be governed by its laws, cannot be disputed.

What then are the duties and defects of social and domestic life among us, under such a recognition? In other words, how do we act out the great principles by which we profess to be governed?

* See Appendix, Note (A).

CHAPTER II.

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS.

THE benefits, the dangers, and the duties of social life, seem to arise chiefly out of the power which men possess of acting on each other for evil or for good. In past ages men influenced each other chiefly through the medium of wealth, station, and physical force; but in the course of our progress into the present period of our civilization, new sources of influence have been developed, through circumstances which have brought each class of society into contact, and so facilitated personal and mental intercourse, as to have established a free trade in knowledge, tastes, and opinions, between the different grades of society.

The same circumstances have developed and cherished the natural tendency in man to combine for particular purposes,—a tendency which was formerly called into action with difficulty, and only by extreme circumstances, but when exerted, was ever a powerful engine for the attainment of the most important ends.

The means of influencing society are indeed, through the general and rapid diffusion of knowledge, tastes, and feelings, almost unlimited at the present day. Opinions, facts and discoveries, which formerly enlightened and influenced small local societies only, or slowly made their

way through individual minds scattered over the world at large, and holding little communication, are now carried with inconceivable rapidity from one end of the globe to the other,—moving and acting on large bodies of men wholly unconnected by position or circumstances.

A political movement, a thought, a fashion, emanating from some one great social centre, as from our own capital, for instance, and arising perhaps in the mind of some solitary individual, is transmitted in a few hours to innumerable localities over the wide extent of our home empire, and thence in a few days, weeks or months, to foreign and distant shores. Education, printing, postage, steam, electricity, mechanism, all lend their aid to promote this rapid circulation of thought. An idea or principle, a scientific discovery, or matter of fact, is transmitted overnight to the public journals, and by the following morning has communicated itself to thousands and tens of thousands of minds, whose faculties and energies are simultaneously aroused and stimulated by its influence. The impression actually *left* on each mind in this way is not however permanent, nor is society at large moved by it, unless it is renewed often enough to make a lodgement, and to impart that conviction of general sympathy which alone encourages us to action, or unless the latent spark so communicated chances to light upon some mind capable both of disengaging it, and of kindling with the flame thus caught, the minds of others. To both these modes of influencing society, the cheapness, ease, and continuousness of literary communication greatly contribute.

Day after day, and year after year, the same idea is

presented to the mind, by means of public journals, reviews and other notices, until it has become diffused among millions of individual minds, and having gradually mixed itself up with their thoughts, prejudices, feelings, and interests, is appropriated as their own, and is at length expressed and recognized as public opinion: or if destined to a more immediate influence, is communicated by the mind which originated, or the kindred intelligence which received it, to some popular assembly, where the impression is deepened by sympathy, and the sentiment is transmitted with all the increased weight of numbers, to influence similar masses of intelligent beings.

Owing to this rapid circulation of thought, the minds of individuals who have no sort of personal connection are unfolded to each other, and their mutual sources of strength made known, so that a facility is given to those combinations for particular purposes, which form a remarkable feature of our age. By their means, expression and weight are given to the thoughts and interests of that part of the community who form a minority in point of wealth and power, but very often a majority in point of numbers and intelligence; and thus by the united strength of some small individual means, the rights of every class and grade in society come to be recognized, and their claims forced on the notice of their fellow-men.

At an early stage of civilization these combinations seem to have been essential to the preservation of some of the commonest rights of humanity. Afterwards, when those rights were more generally recognized, the spirit

which called them forth slumbered, except when some new and intolerable evil roused the fears and the intelligence of the age to this means of self-protection. Towards the close of the last century, combinations were again forced on mankind to repel evils which were ancient indeed, but which the growing intelligence of the nation refused any longer to endure. At the present day they are not only a source of political power extending to the lowest ranks, but they form also the fashionable momentum of society.

We have combinations for the promotion of religious and political purposes, for charities, for education, for literary and scientific ends, for railroad speculations with their locomotive and atmospheric divisions; combinations for amusement, and finally, as a cross division, we may add combinations for party purposes and also to promote the selfish ends of particular classes*. Such a rapid circulation of thought, and such a kind of connection with the masses of our fellow-creatures, seem to involve new and growing responsibilities, and to complicate our duties, inasmuch as they increase to an almost fearful extent the social influences of mankind.

Bitter and idle words, falsehoods uttered heedlessly, or to serve some private purpose at a public meeting, no longer sink into oblivion, or remain with the circle of hearers to which they were addressed—they go forth with the speed of steam, or of air, to corrode and em-

* This last head involves the most unhappy class of combinations which could have been formed by men for their mutual injury,—*trades' unions*. The result of a diffusion of education will show itself, we may hope, in counter-combinations of those very classes to put *down strikes*.

bitter, to mislead or deceive, thousands of other minds; when by him perhaps who uttered them, they are remembered no more.

But this is not all; the evil passions, and false impressions, and bad principles, contained in books, which the expenses of publication and the difficulty of transmission formerly confined to a small number of readers, are now diffused among the mass of our population —among the young, the ignorant, and the idle of mankind. So that in both ways a new responsibility has arisen, and is laid on the speakers and writers, especially the popular writers, of the present day, who thus enter into communication with the public mind, and exert over their fellow-creatures of every class, and age, and degree, a real and powerful influence for good or for evil.

And if the relations between mankind at large have been so much extended and strengthened by the various and newly-developed means of communication which the present period of general advancement presents, the habits and manners of social and of domestic life have been little less influenced by the same causes. No longer confined to the narrow circle in which we chance to have been born, or bound through professional or local circumstances by the laws of a particular coterie, our minds have freer intercourse, and are less exposed to the uncontrolled dominion of those prejudices which belong to the sect or party with whom we chance to be connected. Under these circumstances, we should be led to expect a great improvement in the general tenor of our social and domestic life at the

present day; and accordingly, in comparing it with the records, oral and written, even of the early part of this nineteenth century, we do find that a much higher tone of moral and intellectual development prevails among us.

But there is another and more important inquiry, which still remains,—viz. the state of our social and domestic life in reference to our position as members of *a community professing Christianity*. And this is the portion of the great subject before us which I venture to take up, in order to inquire, whether we are really progressing, under the advantages which our present enlarged intelligence and high state of civilization seem to afford us, to a more perfect acting out of the great moral principles of our nature, as they are sanctioned and enforced by divine command and divine example: and how far the influences to which we are ourselves exposed, and to which we expose others, are fashioned and guarded by our Christian faith and our Christian principles.

CHAPTER III.

"THE WORLD," OR SOCIAL RECREATIONS.

EVERY thoughtful person must have felt perplexed by the duties and difficulties arising out of what may be called, his private intercourse with Society.

It is not in those occasional combinations with other men, which have been alluded to, that our chief perplexities seem to lie, though they often involve very painful duties: our relations under this temporary connection are generally well-defined, and do not necessarily interfere with our private habits of thought and of life. It is then in the ordinary intercourse which we maintain with individuals, be they many or few, and which intercourse forms, what is generally expressed by the word "*Society*," or "the *World*," that the difficulty of our negative duties,—of avoiding evil, *i. e.*—principally lies.

To mix in the World,—to hold this Social intercourse with our fellow creatures,—and yet, to live to ourselves,—to live, *i. e.* under the individual responsibility of our own religious faith and moral sense, is a difficulty which meets us at the very threshhold of life, and causes much disturbance and perplexity to earnest and thoughtful minds; sometimes inducing people to

withdraw altogether from any intercourse with their fellow-creatures, except what necessity enforces,—sometimes leading them to form exclusive coteries, and to renounce the society of those whose opinions and habits do not accord with their own. And yet in withdrawing ourselves from intercourse with those who differ from us,—even though that difference be such as should seem to justify exclusiveness,—we do undeniably contract our means of contributing to the general welfare of others, and of influencing them, perchance, for good; while we run the risk of cherishing wrong and hurtful prejudices, in an attempt to guard our more sacred sympathies from invasion. A man's *friends* indeed, should belong to "the household of faith;" (not confining that term to any particular Church, but using it in its widest signification) but it is not good to live with friends alone; and when the Apostle cautions his converts against forming alliances,—"yoking themselves with unbelievers,"—he does not bid them refrain from all intercourse, even with the heathen world. In withdrawing ourselves then from the society of our fellow-creatures, we seem to be frustrating the intentions of that Great Being, who, having appointed this world as our school of discipline, has made our happiness and improvement in it depend very much on each other; and who in casting our lot with that of other men, has made our duty to our neighbour second only to our personal relations with Himself; while He seems especially to have indicated his will that no definite separation in this world should take place between the

wheat and the tares, even if it were in the power of man, which,—except in extreme cases,—it is not, to decide, which is which.

The purposes which lead us to associate together, beyond such as are connected with the business or domestic ties of life, seem to be chiefly those of *recreation*. It is therefore obviously, among the amusements and recreations of the world, that we must look for those hindrances and difficulties which meet us in social life, and perplex our sense of christian duty, both as regards our neighbour and ourselves. I have said, our sense of christian duty, because, though our Moral Sense, and other reasons may, and often do, induce us to avoid evil and act rightly, both in social and in private life, it is as Christians only, that we are *pledged* to do so.

Religious persons have been more divided on the subject of what are called the amusements of the world,—involving as they do, many of the habits of social life,—than perhaps on any other. It has been made, in fact, the broad line of distinction between two parties of professing Christians, which has separated them more definitely, than difference of opinion touching even the most important articles of faith could have done. And this cannot be otherwise: for if the recreations adopted by the world, are in themselves sinful, there should be no compromise with them, and we can no more lend them even the countenance of our presence, than we could, in olden time, have sat at idol feasts. On the other hand, if moral evil be only incidentally, or only partially, connected with the recrea-

tions of the world,—as it is indeed with our ordinary business,—then, every one has to judge for himself, how far he can, in his own person at least, avoid that evil; and it will be a question with thoughtful minds, whether, since it is in our social hours of recreation, that we are most likely to exercise a beneficial influence over each other, we are authorized to stand entirely aloof from the social enjoyments of our fellow-creatures; since it is conceivable at least, that in the course of our social intercourse, we might be the means of introducing a purer moral taste into the amusements, as well as into the ordinary occupations of life; so that in both we may be working out the will of our Heavenly Father, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

But there is a question at the bottom of all this, which seems, at different periods, to have disturbed the repose of serious persons, and especially of those who are endowed with a morbid and fearful sensitiveness. Are not all recreations and amusements repugnant to the circumstances of our present condition on earth, unsuitable to the discipline we are avowedly undergoing, and inconsistent with what we know of the will of God concerning us?

No person perhaps, endowed with a healthy temperament, and sound judgment, who contemplates the world without, and its relation to the world within us, who perceives the connection between our organization, and the delightful objects of which it is formed to take cognizance, can doubt, that positive and ample provision has been made by its divine Author, for our en-

joyment: nor can they well avoid seeing, that almost every object calculated to support and prolong our existence, has, by an evident conformity of purpose, been made suitable to the promotion of our pleasures and enjoyments also. This may surely be called, the natural indication of God's will with regard to us. And that will seems indicated also, in the slight and imperfect record we possess, of his earliest dispensations in regard to man. In the garden of Eden was made to grow, "every tree that was *pleasant to the sight* and good for food." That will is still further manifested in the old Scripture history, where the Almighty sanctions the natural goods and pleasures He has provided, by making them, on many occasions, signs of his favour;—the especial rewards of the righteous; as being fulfilments of promise, and therefore, blest to them, though not altogether withheld from others.

It may be said however, that all this was very suitable to the old dispensation, but that under the Gospel, whose rewards are *future*, and whose Founder led a life of privation, and closed it in suffering, we are to consider our life as one of discipline, and that such discipline is inconsistent with enjoyment from earthly objects, because they have a tendency to draw aside our minds from the grave and sacred concerns of our high calling.

Now in this view of the subject, it is taken for granted, that pleasure only,—not sorrow, not the fretting cares, nor the business of life, possesses such a tendency to distract our minds. I believe it will be found by every one's own experience, far otherwise. I believe it will be found, that the cares of the world are more distracting

than its pleasures, and that it is chiefly in so far forth as they *are cares*, that its pleasures are hurtful.

Again, is it likely that this world, the scene of our education for a better, should contain none of the elements of that better world, or rather, none of the analogies which might serve to connect us with it? that while it involves the pleasures of gain, and the hard intercourse connected with worldly business, the enjoyments furnished by nature and by art, and the gratifications afforded by social intercourse should be forbidden? We do not in fact observe that a life of hardship and suffering has, in itself any improving tendency: and there seems reason, on the contrary, to believe, that *they* are the most likely to profit by the chastening of the Lord, who have tasted his benefits. What men indeed have had higher conceptions of heavenly things, or more earnest desires after happiness, than some of those whose minds have been most exquisitely alive to the healthful enjoyments of this? It is scarcely necessary to allude by name to One, whose bright spirit, and kindly sympathy carried its cheering, yet chastened influence, into every scene of innocent mirth; and who was awake to almost every source of enjoyment which God has given to his creatures,—for his "Life" is now with those, who knew him not.

To educate a man indeed, for a certain state by means which should exclude all notions, even by analogy, of the promised condition of that state, seems very inconsistent with any ideas which we can venture to form of Divine Wisdom.

I have dwelt on this point, because it seems to me,

that there is at the bottom of many religious theories, an undefined notion, that the happiness of the Creature, is not, in this world at least, conformable to the will of his Creator: and moreover, that those who are under the influence of Christian hopes and feelings, do not require the enjoyments or recreations of the world. Now it is true, that these enjoyments are not consistent with the most exalted state of religious feelings; but then, it must be remembered that this exalted state is not, and cannot be, the ordinary one, even of the most advanced Christians; inasmuch as it would be utterly inconsistent with the course of our discipline, and the discharge of our duties. If indeed, it be occasionally permitted to some favoured individuals who have borne the burden and heat of the day, to ascend the mount, and commune on things divine, in high abstraction from earthly feelings, we have no reason to expect the ordinary occurrence, still less, the maintenance of such a state: nor could it probably be maintained, as we are constituted, without serious injury to the faculties which we are called upon to exercise in this our earthly condition. Such an attempt,—such a vain and futile attempt to throw aside the legitimate pursuits and enjoyments of life, has cost many an amiable enthusiast the possession of his reason, and for ever unfitted him to fulfill the duties of daily life.*

The views however, of our own great Teacher on this

* See Pascal and others.

Since this note was written, an admirable article has appeared in the Edinburgh Review for January 1847 on the life of Pascal, in which this subject is discussed with great power.

as on every other subject, will afford the best guide to our feelings and conduct. Now from the record of his earthly life, we find that He left humanity, on all points, not in themselves pernicious, just as He found it * ; that He came to regulate, not altogether to change, the tendencies of our nature. He was Himself occasionally present at festive scenes ; and it does not appear that He came to condemn them, though He reproved sin, whenever and wherever He encountered it. His disciples it is true, were (and are) called upon to hold themselves ready to resign both the enjoyments, and the ordinary occupations of life, when great and high duties summon them to other scenes of action. They were cautioned against over-solicitude about worldly objects ; they were reminded too, where their treasure ought to be, and he who has placed it in such security, need not fear its invasion by worldly pleasures. On one occasion indeed, Martha was gently reproved for her anxiety about the entertainment of her illustrious Guest ; not because such anxiety appears to have been considered by Him as wrong in itself, but because it led her to neglect that "one thing needful," which her wiser Sister found in listening at his feet.

But though these, or similar reflections may lead us to the conclusion, that the enjoyment of pleasure is not at variance with the revealed will of God concerning us, nor therefore, of course, inconsistent with the conditions of our present state of existence ; it may still be a subject of doubt, whether the question of worldly amusements is at all affected by these conclusions ; since there are sub-

* "Lectures on a Future State," by a Country Rector.

jects of pleasure and interest connected with scientific and literary pursuits, with the contemplation of the works of nature, and even with the actual ordinary business of life, sufficient to afford interest and gratification to a well-constituted and healthful mind. This is true; and will probably be more practically felt and acknowledged, as education and civilization advance: but it would appear, that the highest mental pursuits and enjoyments are not of a nature to afford what may be called *recreation*, to minds of all classes; while recreation,—by which I mean that state of relaxation, obtained by a suspension of the ordinary cares and occupations of life, whether mental or bodily, seems essential to the preservation of a sound and healthy condition*. What the recreation shall be, must of course depend very much, as has been said, on the state of education and refinement, and on the position and taste of the individuals; since that which forms the recreation of one class of persons, may be felt as severe labour by another. Simple rest, for instance, or suspension of the ordinary employments of life, is, for a short period, recreation to the man of business; while the idle man, or the man of pleasure, must seek his relaxation in labour, because for him, rest, as a relaxation, does not exist. Mental occupation, again, is relaxation to those whose *bodies* are fatigued,—bodily labour, to those whose *minds* have been over-worked. Still, the mere change of employment and suspension of mental exertion, will not always enable the man of business to throw off the habitual train of thought connected with his occupation. He requires to have his outward nature supplied with ob-

* See Appendix, Note (B).

jects, and his tastes called into action, to fill the vacuum created by suspension of labour, and enable him to enjoy it *as a relaxation.* And to the young again, there is, in fact, no recreation in simple rest, unless an union of mental and bodily cares have early placed them in an unnatural state.

If then, under certain conditions of our life, recreation is only to be obtained by amusement, we may conclude that amusements are both useful and healthful to man; that they are in short to the grown man, very much what play is to the child,—as healthful, and perhaps as harmless, provided the man be as well aware as the child, that he *is* only at play.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR SOCIAL RECREATIONS CONSIDERED IN THEMSELVES.

As it is to the amusements which we partake of in our social intercourse with each other,—especially in that intercourse which is extended beyond the circle of our immediate connections,—that exception has chiefly been taken, and to which the title of "pleasures of the world" is usually confined; it may be worth our while, to give a little consideration to the subject of amusement generally, and then glance at the recreations of the present day, to see if they do in themselves contain sources of evil, or how far they are connected with hurtful influences.

To render our amusements consistent with our religious and moral obligations, we may surely make for them three requisitions.

1st. That they shall be *innocent in themselves*.

2ndly. That they shall involve no physical or moral evil to our *neighbour*.

3rdly. That they involve no physical or moral evil to *ourselves*; and I use the word moral in the extended sense which it must always bear, among professors of Christianity, as including and forming part of, our religious duties.

Let us look to the first of these requisitions, and see

how far the social amusements or recreations of this nineteenth century may be considered in themselves innocent.

They consist chiefly and generally I believe, in dancing, cards, music, scenic representations, and conversation. The first four of these amusements, are, by a number of people, considered essentially sinful; and persons who partake of them are included under the category of "the ungodly world," or "those who are without," in adoption of the language used by the early Christians, respecting those who did not belong to the Christian Church—viz. the idolatrous part of the Community among whom they lived. These are heavy charges,—and yet I think it would be difficult to prove that any one of these amusements so denounced, is itself sinful, or has any direct evil tendency; —not even the last—conversation—which is perhaps, though less denounced, the most frequently abused.

Take the first of these popular amusements, viz. dancing; a mode by which young people enjoy an agreeable exercise together, in movements regulated by the sound of instruments, and with steps suitable to the time and tune of music chosen for the purpose; the whole arranged so as to form some fancy figure, in which each person has his appointed part. It is indeed conceivable that the figure adopted may be unsuited either to our national habits, or to the feelings and taste of some portion of the community: but this belongs not to the amusement itself, but to the form or fashion it assumes; and certainly, described as above, in its simple form, it seems to involve no element of evil, worthy of being condemned by the severest moralist. Nor is it easy to conceive an amusement more harmless and agreeable for

young people, than an exercise so controlled yet enlivened by music. That in a civilized and intellectual age, it should be made a business of serious importance, arranged for weeks beforehand, one to which real sacrifices are made, and in which young matrons and grave senators formally engage, would excite surprise, if we had not been trained to consider a ball as a very grave and important concern of life. Still as an amusement in itself, surely dancing may be pronounced harmless.

Let us proceed to cards, in which it is equally difficult to detect any direct evil, because the playing for money is evidently not an attribute of the games themselves. If indeed we connect it with the loss or gain of money, —beyond at least a sum which could be felt only as a slight forfeit by either party,—then I think we must feel, that in this connection, it does involve a very decided portion of evil. For even when the loss or gain is too inconsiderable to incur, even by approach, the imputation of gaming, there is always considerable danger in a taste's being thus imperceptibly formed for the pleasure of gain.

With regard to gaming, the direct sin which it involves, as I have heard it well explained, is *covetousness*. It was not meant by the person who gave the definition, that *dishonest* gaming merely involves this sin, but that *all* gaming necessarily implies a desire to enrich yourself by your neighbour's loss—to obtain his property without an equivalent. It is in vain to say, you do it by mutual consent: doubtless you do; for otherwise it would involve a breach of the eighth commandment also.

But the improper use of cards must not prevent our

looking at the amusement *in itself*, when it takes its place, I think as a harmless, though not a very lively recreation.

With respect to music, I believe it is generally admitted that there is no evil involved in the amusement itself; but some persons confine this admission to sacred music, and suppose that every other use of it involves sin. With equal propriety however, it might be said, that conversation, on any other than sacred subjects,—or, *the business of life*,—for this is never excluded,—is sinful. No doubt, many silly and romantic songs may be listened to with pleasure, for the sake of the music and charm of the performance; but I should think, on the whole, with much less injury than to similar *conversation*; since in the former case, it is through the music, and not through the words, that our taste is gratified. To say that these are immoral songs, is merely to say that music, like conversation, is sometimes misused: but its own delightful influence may I think be pronounced harmless.

Scenic representations have always laboured under reproach; and yet it will not perhaps be difficult to show that the evil, though great, does not necessarily arise out of the amusement itself. To represent scenes of real or imaginary life, can be no more sinful in itself, than to describe them in books, or in vivid and animated conversation; and the evils attending such representation, must therefore depend, either on some other circumstances connected with it; or, on the scenes represented, or on the manner in which they are represented; just as the very same scenes given in conversation, would re-

ceive their colouring from the pure or impure, the wise or foolish mind of the converser. Yet it is conceivable that scenic representations of life and manners might be among the most harmless as well as rational of our amusements. Wit and humour in conversation, often take the taint of bitterness,—and strictures on men and manners, of personality; but scenic delineations of this nature have no tendency either to excite unkindly feelings towards our neighbours, or undue complacency in ourselves; and we may laugh at folly and impertinence, at awkwardness or affectation, when exhibited by, and attached to imaginary personages, as harmlessly as we should do at those qualities in the abstract.

But it may be said, that all this applies to fiction universally, and not merely to scenic representation. This is true: the difference lies chiefly between the more lively and exciting effect produced by representing action, instead of reading it; and how far this effect may be injurious, must depend very much on the peculiar turn of individual minds; but it does not appear that it is at all necessarily, or likely, to be generally so.

Whether indeed the representation of the stronger and more evil passions of our nature, of anger, hatred, revenge, or love in its violent and exaggerated form, does not involve a state of feeling too serious for amusement, and too exciting for refreshment and recreation, is very doubtful; since to dwell on moral evil, without having its remedy suggested, or placed before us, must be very painful, especially to those who do not carry in their own minds the consoling consciousness of this remedy. Still it is probable, that a representation of these passions

and their results (merely as connected with the condition of man in this world) contrasted with those opposite ones produced by the nobler and more amiable qualities of our nature, may not be altogether profitless, especially to a certain class of minds; since it is by no means a useless subject of thought, that the very conduct which alone can fit us for a better state of existence, (however powerless to obtain it,) is *that* best suited to make us happy here.

A skilful Christian dramatist might perhaps introduce allusions which would not offend our reverential feelings, and yet would render his representations more useful and truthful, in directing attention to the higher sources of virtuous conduct, without bringing them into too familiar contact with imaginary scenes; for in a fiction of this nature Divine truth should be hinted at, rather than fully developed. As for the profane allusions and invocations, which so often shock the ear and feelings in scenic representations, they are indeed serious objections, but *they* also lie not so much against the amusement of the drama itself, as against the abuse of it.

There are other abuses of this amusement; but the most serious of them is the introduction of dramas inherently, or suggestively, immoral, usually I believe imported from the French stage. These are in themselves evil, but this evil is no more necessarily connected with theatrical representation, than similar immorality is with a novel or an essay; nearly all indeed that has been said on this subject, applies equally to fiction in general.

Conversation, which makes the fifth mode by which social recreation is enjoyed, has been usually considered

so free from objection, that none but the Ascetics of La Trappe have ever included it in the list of sinful amusements. And yet we may remark by the way, that it does, in fact, contain more positively evil tendencies than any other social amusement;—tendencies, from which even religious conversation itself is not wholly secure. The tongue is the heart's conductor, and as the heart's treasure is, such will be the influence communicated through it, for good or for evil. The evil may find its way through the medium of the most sacred subjects; and, happily, the good may diffuse itself also, through the lightest and most lively ones.

If the remarks which I have ventured to make, on the principal amusements of our age, are just, it would appear that the first requisition which has been demanded for our recreations, is not infringed in the intrinsic *nature* of them,—viz. that they shall be *in themselves innocent*: so that if evil be connected with them, it must be in some indirect form.

CHAPTER V.

OUR SOCIAL RECREATIONS CONSIDERED IN CONNECTION WITH OUR NEIGHBOUR.

The second requisition which I have ventured to make for the social amusements of our age, is, that they shall involve no evil, moral or physical, to our neighbours,—by whom I mean, all with whom we are in any way connected.

Is this requisition invaded, by our own conduct, in an age, disposed, beyond any other which history records, to recognize and deal tenderly with the rights of others, —by the conduct of a people distinguished for benevolence, and during a period, when the higher classes of society have so manfully struggled for the rights of their neighbour among the poorer classes of their own countrymen; and have also claimed those rights,—even in defiance of their own (supposed) interests,—for races separated from them by colour, language, and civilization?

Is there a nation professing Christianity, and enjoying the moral and intellectual advantages of the 19th century, whose amusements are so contrived as *necessarily* to invade the rights of others? It is startling to recognize our own in such a nation,—a nation whose Divine law declares our duty to our neighbour, in the strongest terms, and our responsibility for every occasion of falling which we place in his way;—a nation, which on ordinary

occasions, concerns itself largely with the sins and distresses of its fellow-creatures,—which possesses societies for the promotion of Christian Knowledge,—for the discouragement of vice,—for the diffusion of education,—for the cultivation of temperance, &c.;—yet a nation which voluntarily, and wantonly,—in the pursuit of its own pleasures,—exposes a large portion of its population, not only to physical inconvenience and injury, but to moral temptations which no ordinary force of character can possibly resist, and to temptations which lead to extravagance, intemperance, and vice.

In many, very many persons, I am certain that it is rather want of thought, than natural selfishness which leads to such an anomaly; for it is one of the evils of a gay and bustling life, that it indisposes us to reflection, and hence, leads very amiable persons not only to neglect their own highest privileges, but unconsciously to trample on the rights of others.

During the London season, (and nearly the same things occur in the smaller resorts of society,) many thousand persons whom we must be considered to have pledged ourselves to protect from moral and physical evil, by making our home, their home,—are exposed every night,—in the service, not of our business, but of our pleasure,—to temptations which it is scarcely possible they should encounter unharmed, and to physical inconveniences which they can shun only, by exposure to far greater moral evils.

At an hour before midnight, when a long and cheerful evening has drawn to that close which nature seems to point out as the termination of active life, and the

commencement of a season of rest,—the heads of the household leave their homes, (on the nights dedicated to amusement,) and sally forth with their young daughters, or by themselves, if they have no such charge, to fulfill their social engagements, and pass their night in the saloons of their acquaintance. They must just look in at Mrs. B.'s,—and be in time for the best part of the dancing at Lady R.'s—they cannot return very early on poor M.'s account, because, as every one knows, the pleasantest part of a ball is that which precedes its close.

The murky sun of a London spring morning is struggling with the clouds of smoke, which obscure its rising, before the hours appointed for recreation close. The guests however, at length depart; the last carriage calls, the last trampling of horses pronounce the revel at an end; the light of day beams dim on the wearied sight, and the votaries of pleasure betake themselves to their homes, and their conventional night.

But what, meanwhile, has been the fate of those who have escorted their employers to the scenes of their pleasures? If their Lord and Lady are so moderate as to limit the places of their resort *, they may be considered fortunate; for they can at least return home, put up their carriage and horses, and pass away the time, as best they may, without any responsibility, without the resources of legitimate employment, or even of amusement, until the hour arrives at which it is their business again to

* We are acquainted with persons so considerate as to abstain from multiplying their engagements, avowedly on account of their servants, and who even send their own attendant to bed and assist each other in their toilette duties. Such persons would doubtless be among the first to acquiesce in a reform of the habits and hours of social life.

fall in with the throng in the streets, and await the time of their summons. These are by far the best circumstances which they are likely to be placed in. But a fate, at least equally common, is to spend the night in the streets, that they may be in readiness to convey their lady from one scene of pleasure to another. In this way they are exposed both to the inconveniences of weather, and to the weariness of watching. No wonder that a mode of enjoyment, or at least of alleviation, during the hours occupied by their employers in amusement, should have suggested itself. They subscribe to a club, or frequent a spirit-shop, which each locality too easily affords; and where their money is consumed in drinking, refreshments, and cards, while they take it in turn to wait, or appoint watches to summon them to their respective carriages.

A fine gentlemanly-looking young man once entered the cottage of a poor and dying person, who greeted him as his son. Surprise being expressed by one who happened to be visiting there, at the fact that a person of his appearance could have parents in so distressed a state, he apologized for their condition, by relating the history of the expenses which his London life involved,—among others, the being compelled to subscribe to a club or society, such as I have alluded to,—where, he admitted, drinking and playing were usually going on,—the providing watches, &c. He spoke of these things as matters of course, said he had good wages, and a kind master, and seemed to think his position less a hardship than a necessity.

It is well to pause on such facts. It may be pleasant

to look on the scene which some gala night presents, at one of our fashionable mansions, when the suites of apartments are thrown open, with their lights and flowers and music, and brilliant company, bringing back to our minds the fairy dreams of childhood: but we must not think on that which is passing without, which the adjoining streets or square would disclose; the weary hours of watching and waiting, in wind or rain, it may be, or on the more truly dismal resort, which that well-lighted cheerful-looking tavern affords, to the weary attendants of each member of this gay assembly.

We may venture to say, that every re-union of five hundred persons involves a night of temptation, if not of actual sin,—of watching and weariness,—to at least double the number of persons, while as many more at home are deprived of their natural rest, at its natural season, and are perhaps seeking their amusement in a way not less dangerous to their moral characters.

Many a young lady's maid owes her ruin to the hours in which she is thus left, with no definite amusement, with no companion, or with the companionship only of the head of the establishment, or the valet, who has himself probably been trained in this school of nocturnal dissipation; and many a sad story has reached our ears of fearful evil involved by such watchings, on young and thoughtless and unprotected women;—for this is no merely probable supposition: dismal facts lie beneath.

Her ladies however at length come home,—perhaps they return gay in spirits to the wearied attendant who is in waiting at the toilette; but that kindly feeling

which does happily sometimes exist between persons so connected, and leads them to sympathize in the pleasures of their employers, must be wholly wanting here: they can present to her wearied and haggard mind only a mortifying sense of the difference of their positions, and a consciousness that the enjoyment they have been partaking, has been purchased in part at the expense of her own. But still oftener, her ladies return fatigued and disappointed, or vexed and out of humour, giving evidence that pleasure is not always recreation; or at least that theirs has not been of that healthful harmless nature which refreshes without causing reaction, and which leaves the temper unimpaired, and the mind disengaged for its sacred duties. What then will be her thoughts, if haply, under the weight of a dull, or aching, or sleepy head, she does think at all,—or rather what will be the influence insensibly worked into her own character,—by the ways of her employers?

It is a fact, too well known to the clergy of great cities, that the most distressed, as well as depraved portion of their parishioners, are servants out of place; reduced, often through misconduct, but frequently also through sickness, to extreme poverty;—through sickness often; for the lives which men-servants lead in London and other great cities present a mixture of luxury and hardship, which renders their health more uncertain than those of other classes, and disables them from meeting the discomforts which they have to endure when thrown out of service. If they marry early,—the best chance perhaps, of enabling them to resist the temptations to which they are exposed,—how are they to sup-

port a family decently, when their own habits, dependent in a great measure on those of their employers, involve a certain, and for them, heavy expenditure, and introduce them to temptations which may lead to much greater? And how can we be surprised at the idle, and expensive and irreligious habits, which usually belong to the families of men-servants so situated?

The coachmen in London who usually reside in mews adjacent to the mansion of their employers, necessarily involve their families in the same irregular and uncomfortable kind of life which they are themselves obliged to lead. The wife sits up for her husband, if his night's work is expected to be a short one, and she keeps up a bit of fire (in the cold season) and a light burning for him. If the engagements of his employers lead her to expect him no more that night, she goes to bed, and rises after daybreak to let him in. Then, unwilling perhaps to disturb him by the bustle of domestic concerns, she retires again to her rest, and it is late in the morning ere she rouses her children. Thus arise habits of indolence and loss of temper, both to herself and to them. They want their breakfast before she is ready to give it them: she is behind-hand in everything. If they go to school, they are late in attendance; they lose their places in their class, and get a bad name for unpunctuality. A few, a very few, will go without their morning meal rather than incur such a reproof; such cases are known, and very touching ones they are, to those who consider by what a train of circumstances these young ones are so early exposed to difficulty and disgrace. On Sunday these nocturnal habits tell against

regular attendance at church, and lead indirectly to a variety of other evils; and here I have not expressly named Saturday-night parties, including the opera, because it is so obvious that their hours must especially infringe, both on the duties and recreations of that day in the week, which every man is supposed to have his own claims upon.

In reply to all this, some of us may perhaps say, My nightly engagements are confined to two days in the week, sometimes less, and during a large portion of the year even these cease. Still, the temptations and discomforts of these two nights, it should be remembered, may have a pernicious effect on our dependents during all the remainder of the week; and the painful fact remains, that we chuse for the season of our amusements, that period of the day which involves frightful and abiding evils to a large class of our fellow-creatures.

If the lives of some thousands of our carriage-attendants were traced to their close, full often would they be found to end in vice and misery, and not unfrequently as agents or accomplices in crime. We need but turn to the Old Bailey trials, I believe, to verify this assertion. In outward circumstances and appearance, our men-servants usually partake of the prosperity, the luxury, and gaiety of their employers; but alas! they find it easier to imitate the faults, than the virtues of their employers. And let us remember, that the faults,—the errors,—of the higher classes of society lead to vices in the lower. For how can they look with awe or dread, on immoralities to which they know their employers lightly expose them, while in pursuit of their own plea-

sures? Again, it is well known, that the human frame, near and after midnight, is not in the same state as before; the pulse is accelerated, and a greater excitement of the nervous system takes place. I have heard this circumstance actually adduced as a reason for making the night a season of amusement. "People are more up to the thing, late, than early in the night." To me this seems a strong argument in favour of repose for ourselves at this season; but how much stronger a one, against exposing the minds and bodies of others, in this state of susceptibility and excitement, to moral and physical injury!

Yet this is not all; if our own minds find the performance of our religious duties, after long excitement at night, more difficult to discharge, how can we expect that our men-servants can return from their nightly occupations in a state to close their day with prayer! They do not,—and they charge the failure of this duty, (when brought to think about it,) and rest its excuse, on their employers. The same might formerly have been said of duties connected with Sunday: these are now indeed very generally respected, though the day is still by far too much wrested from its legitimate purposes as a religious festival commemorating two of the greatest events in the sacred history of the world: a festival protected by our legislature as a day of rest from ordinary labour, but often devoted to purposes which interfere with the claims of the class of persons whose rights we are considering.

On the whole then it must, I fear, be admitted, that the hours which we chuse for our recreations, and the

practice of multiplying those recreations, so as to detain our servants in the street during the night season, form two distinct infringements of the duty we owe to our neighbour; since they do involve both physical and moral evil to him.

But there is another class of persons who are, though in a less obvious way, liable to be injured by our pleasures,—I mean those who minister to our personal adornment, and that of our mansions. The subject of dress-makers has of late occupied so large a share of public attention, that there is little occasion to dwell upon it here. To give plenty of time for the execution of orders;—to wear a dress less becoming or less suitable to the occasion, rather than compel the persons whom we employ, or afford to them a pretext, to overwork their apprentices, and often (a well-known fact) to support them by stimulants for these excesses of labour,—will certainly come under this class of duties.

There is another important circumstance occurring in this view of our pleasures, as connected with the welfare of our fellow-creatures, which should not be omitted: Are those pleasures so costly as to hinder us from paying for any part of them promptly, and thus to occasion distress or inconvenience to our tradespeople, or to those whom they keep in pay? Those decorations must be too expensive, be they ever so low-priced, for which we cannot afford to pay on demand.

Many cases of distress have exposed such facts as the following: "My furniture is distrained because I cannot make up such a sum." "You have good custom." "I have." "Why not call in your dues?" "I have

done so from those *with whom I could venture,*—but Miss L., Mrs. B., Lady C., would not employ me again if I were to press them; they left Mrs. —— for the same thing." Now it may be hoped that had the extremity of distress in the case I allude to, been made known, the debt of justice would not have been delayed: but this full explanation was supposed to be injurious to the future prospects of the unfortunate creditor. It is hard that our tradespeople should be forced to reveal their necessities, in order to obtain their rights; and it is quite obvious that we are spending what is not our own, when we continue to disburse money with such a claim standing against us. I knew an accomplished French milliner,—working on her own account, in a small way, because she could not afford a show-room,—reduced to an extremity of distress, quite appalling, and obliged to apply for relief under promise of secrecy, in order to save herself and her infant, after a long and severe illness, from starvation, at a period when several sums of money were owing to her, and *had* been owing for a twelvemonth, which she pressed for, and could not obtain, though doubtless it was never intended to deprive her ultimately of her dues; to pay the debt was inconvenient, perhaps impossible, at the time; but then how was that impossibility incurred?

This (we may hope) thoughtless and practically-dishonest selfishness, is common to both sexes; and a very severe burden is imposed on a large portion of the community, by the lax notions of duty which exist on this subject; it is in connection with our amusements however that I have alluded to it here, because I think it infringes on that requisition which I have ventured to

make for our recreations, *i. e.* that they shall involve no necessary evil to our neighbour.

But there is an amusement which does perhaps involve great and fearful evils to our fellow-creatures, without seeming to touch on any individual responsibility,—I mean theatrical entertainments. It is a subject which lies on difficult and doubtful ground, for here are no *definite rights* of our neighbour invaded. Still, it seems to be a fair subject of discussion, how far amusements which are so costly to the morals and happiness of our fellow-creatures, can safely be countenanced, and whether in partaking them, we are not contributing indirectly to injure our neighbour.

Many reasons have been urged against abstaining from amusements so delightful to a large portion of the community. My attending the theatre, it has been said, does not expose anyone to danger; while it enables some of the younger male members of my family to enjoy an amusement which they would not easily be induced to relinquish, secure from the dangers to which it might expose them, if unprotected by the domestic circle. Again, my refusing to attend the theatre, supposing that I could influence all worthy people to do the same, would abandon the amusement altogether to the thoughtless and dissipated; and thus uncontrolled by the moral portion of the public, it would become altogether licentious and abominable. It has also been urged in defence of the theatres, that the London public, especially those of the middle and lower orders, who are engaged all day and every day in the fatiguing details of business,

and many of whom (young clerks, apprentices, &c.) have no domestic circle to join, require this kind of cheap and easy mode of recreation; and that they would, if deprived of this, seek others far less refined and more objectionable. Of the justness of this argument, I cannot pretend to judge, and must let it therefore carry its full weight. But supposing this to be the case, it may perhaps be suggested, that if society is at all responsible for the amusements of the public, it must also,—in an age and country professing to be governed by christian motives and christian morals,—be in some measure responsible for the *harmlessness* of those amusements.

How then does the case stand with respect to theatrical entertainments? There are three great evils actually, though perhaps not necessarily, connected with them,

1st, in the selection of the amusements;

2ndly, in the company admitted; and

3rdly, in the machinery used.

The first is wholly in our power. The second might probably be obviated, by the introduction of small theatres under private management, or under the regulations said to be adopted at some of the German theatres*. But the third,—the education, viz. of a class of persons to a profession which involves great danger,—often destruction to virtuous and religious habits,—is one which should, at least, be made a subject of serious consideration.

* The improvement which is understood to have taken place at one of our own theatres, through the medium of a highly influential and respectable member of the dramatic corps, shows how much more might be effected, under the strong support of public opinion.

Neither as Christians nor as moralists, are even serious persons of the present day, usually in the habit of shrinking from actors and actresses as members of a profession in itself *necessarily* sinful; and many of us rejoice to have found among the accomplished persons whose lot has been cast,—we ask not why or wherefore,—within its precincts,—individuals of both sexes, possessed of pure and amiable characters, adorning their domestic life by a fulfilment of its duties, and impressed we may believe with the consciousness of a higher calling. But of these very persons, how few do we find (are there any?) who are desirous of exposing their own children to the dangers and temptations of that portion of society with which they have been themselves connected! And leaving these bright exceptions, as well as those of a different description, who thrown on such a world as the stage, at the first opening of manhood, or (still more fearful lot) of womanhood, have sunk at once to the level of its ordinary habits and character;—leaving these, what must we think of the fate of those who are trained from early infancy, as danseuses, as harlequins, clowns, columbines, and other appendages to the theatre, to a life involving great physical danger, and almost certain moral destruction?

Who can turn over the pages of such a life as that of Grimaldi, for instance, without the most mournful feelings? Who can even dare to follow out the fates of that band of little creatures who have within a few years been introduced into our theatres? What must they not already have endured, in the course of a training for such perfection in their art as they are said to have attained?

What a sacrifice of all the common rights of childhood! Can we think of our own precious ones, sleeping in unconscious innocence, and venture to look on these more than orphans, without an ardent desire of rescuing them? We talk of the sorrows of factory children, and the miseries of sweeping-boys have been successfully brought before the public, by philanthropists of our age; but I would fain plead the cause of such unhappy little beings as the helpless Viennoises élèves, with whose wrongs and whose dangers, the degraded lot of the others will scarcely bear comparison*. The members of the two

* The cause of this unfortunate class of dancers has been brought before the public with great force by Chambers in his Edinburgh Journal. He makes the following quotation from a publication called 'Le Monde Musicale,' concerning the nature of the physical education which fits a member of the corps de ballet for her profession; the account appears to have been given by one of these members:—

"Ah, Sir! if you did but know how much courage, patience, resignation, and unremitting labour a poor girl must command—if you did but know what excruciating tortures she must submit to, and how many involuntary tears she must stifle, even to become a 'mediocre' dancer, you would at once be moved with terror and compassion.

"Scarcely was I seven years old when I was despatched to the class of M. Barrer. Oftentimes I was sent early in the morning, shivering and half-famished; then commenced the daily torture, of which, however exact my description might be, I should fail of giving you a just idea. Banished from our code, torture has taken refuge in the class for dancing.

"Every morning my feet were imprisoned in a groove-box, heel against heel, and knees turned outwards; my martyred feet accustomed themselves naturally at last to fall in a parallel line. This is what is called '*se tourner*.' After half an hour of the groove, I was subjected to another variety of torture. This time I was obliged to rest my foot on a bar, which I was obliged to hold in a horizontal line, with the hand opposite the foot I was exercising. This they term '*se casser*.'

"After these labours were over, you imagine, perhaps, that I enjoyed the charms of repose; repose for me, indeed! as if a dancer knew what

former classes are at least engaged in an honest calling, for the purpose of earning their bread; the others are made to undergo all their physical and moral suffering, —to risk their happiness in this world, and endanger their hopes in the next,—for our amusement! We talk of the distorted limbs of those who work in factories or in mines, and it is a grievous evil to contemplate,—but compare it with that distortion of mind to which, year by year, these children have been subjected, and we may scarcely hesitate which class claims our strongest compassion.

But many, very many, enlightened and benevolent people, I am convinced, attend these exhibitions without thinking on their cost. For, the great evil of a gay and bustling life is, that the senses let go the impression they receive from its shifting scenes before the mind has had time to gather up its own thoughts, and form its judgments on the subjects they disclose. Many persons are present at such exhibitions for other reasons than those of inclination, and are induced by motives which would fully bear them out were the evil involved less momentous.

With respect to the poor little débutantes of Vienna,

repose was! We were like the wandering Jew, to whom the Barrers and the Coulons were perpetually crying out, 'Dance, dance!' After these *tourners* and *cassers*, we were obliged, in order to escape from professional reprimand or maternal correction, to study assiduously *les jétés*, *les balances*, *les ronds de jambes*, *les cambrioles*, &c. Such, Sir, are the agreeable elements of which the art of dancing is composed; and do not believe that this rude fatigue lasts only for a time; it is to last and to be renewed without intermission; on this condition alone can the dancer preserve her *souplesse* and her *légèrete*. A week of repose must be redeemed by two months of redoubled incessant toil."

we must respect the conduct of the Roman Catholic priests on the continent, who from the first denounced their introduction on the stage*.

It is indeed surprising, that the good taste and moral feeling of our country in this nineteenth century should not have rejected or reformed opera ballets altogether.

These exhibitions too,—which both in the previous training of the performers, and the spectacle they offer, involve so much that is repugnant to the feelings,—have no sort of connection with the drama itself, and can only tend to degrade it, both intellectually and in reference to good taste. But this is, for my purpose, a secondary consideration in discussing the amusements to which we, as a community of professing Christians, lend our countenance in this nineteenth century.

The very existence of a class of persons, devoted, not in the course of their necessary business, but for the public amusement, to a life that is involving so much that is immoral, and so dangerous to their real calling, is an anomaly which will not, it may be trusted, long continue to exist. What would the polished idolaters of past ages think, could they look upon our stage and see young women and little girls exposed in a way they would have shrunk from permitting? What should we feel ourselves at the bare thought of so exposing our own daughters, at the age when it is most important that the very breath of evil should not blow upon them?

* Since these remarks were written, I regret to learn that another company of danseuses, most of them of English parentage, have been formed, in imitation of the Viennoise children, and shipped off to America!

Is there then no possibility that a class of amusements in which so large a portion of the public,—who are not able, or if able, are not likely, to be very choice,—partake, can ever be reformed? Let us hope that this nineteenth century will not pass away without either a reform or abandonment of them.

If actors and actresses would themselves form a corps which should be pure in morals, so that no man or woman of improper character should belong to it*; if their superintendence extended over all those connected with the profession, so that immorality in any of their dependents should be visited by dismissal; if means were taken to protect their young female members from the assaults of vice, under the form of gallantry; if it should become an established rule, that they should appear on the stage, and vanish from it, under that temporary connection only with the public, and be exposed to no green-room introductions; if none should take their place in society, or be admitted into it, simply on the score of being celebrated actors and actresses, but as being respectable and accomplished men and women;—we might expect that, instead of a few individuals who have to struggle with many serious evils, the profession would consist of persons, generally, of a higher class of morals; while the control which a manager belonging to such a class, would be able to exercise over the dramas selected, the scenes, the dresses, *and the company admitted*, might render this recreation as harmless a one as

* Persons who remember the Bath theatre some thirty years ago, say that the then manager never allowed persons of blemished character to remain attached to his corps.

the public of a great city can well enjoy. But then the highest classes must perform their part in the work. If none but those who are known to live correct lives,—however brilliant their talents,—were ever received into society, or admitted to sing in *private houses*, the tone of the higher portion of the profession would certainly be raised. The system must however be steadily adhered to; not placed under the capricious control of fashion, which often excludes some unfortunate person from its circles, while others, whose private morals are in no way better, perhaps worse, are admitted into them.

Before we leave the subject of social recreations altogether, there is one which may be noticed, because though not in itself evil, it is unfortunately connected with much that is injurious to our neighbours as well as ourselves, —I mean horse-racing. Leading, as it almost invariably does, to gambling, it involves a serious injury either by practice, or example, to all classes of persons connected with it. Under what controlling influences it might be brought, so as to render it harmless to all parties connected with it, is a question which does not belong to these pages.

It may seem, after all, that the subject of amusement is scarcely worthy so much disquisition,—that it is easy for those who disapprove, to abstain from it, and to leave others to take their chance. It is easy; but is it right? Are there associations in this nineteenth century, for promoting so many good, and useful, and (some of them) trifling objects, and shall there be none for reforming its amusements, and protecting those who minister to them?

CHAPTER VI.

OUR SOCIAL RECREATIONS CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO OURSELVES.

The third requisition which I have ventured to make for our social pleasures is, that they shall not involve any moral or physical evil to ourselves.

The subject of recreation is altogether much more perplexing in its relation to ourselves, than as connected with our neighbours; because its dangers and difficulties, varying, as they must in some measure do, with the characters and circumstances of individuals, cannot be so easily defined. Still, our duties, connected with this subject, in both its relations, must rest on the same broad principles—those, viz. which govern our actions as members of a community professing Christianity.

Is there then anything in the arrangements of our social amusements inconsistent with the habits of life, which, under such a profession, may be supposed to exist among us; or with the general civilization of this nineteenth century?

I think we should expect from so advanced a condition as our present one, that its social amusements should be such, as to do no violence to our moral feelings, or to our independence of character; that they should be fully recognized *as recreations,* and that the portion of our

time, and the period of our time, which they occupy should involve no moral or physical evil to ourselves. As members of a Christian community, we may be allowed also to expect, that they shall offer no hindrance to the faithful discharge of our religious duties.

How are these claims fulfilled by the arrangements of our social amusements at the present day?

In respect of the hour at which we assemble for the purpose of recreation; does it not involve us in the charge of revelling*, which the Apostle pronounced unsuitable for Christian professors to indulge in? Or is it only to our attendants, that our late night engagements can be productive of evil? Is there no incongruity, no physical or moral evil, in devoting to the excitements of society and hot and crowded rooms under the accelerated pulse which midnight gives, the hours which nature and our own ordinary habits have appointed for repose? Can we, under such circumstances, meet for the duties of social worship? Are we in the most suitable state even for our private devotions? And may we venture to call those recreations either becoming or harmless, which are so contrived as to interfere with some of the most sacred habits and purposes of existence? Are we not, unless endowed with herculean strength and uncommon activity, obliged to repair by indulgence on the following day, the loss and exhausture of the night? There are no doubt exceptions to this demand for rest, among persons of a certain age, and to whom such a life has become also a second nature. But not among the young: they must borrow from the pre-

* See Appendix, Note (C).

cious hours of the following day, to repay the debt they have incurred to nature; yet who that looks on the faded forms of young people in London at the end of a season, can doubt, that it has, after all, been imperfectly paid?

Whether our amusements would be less enjoyable, if their commencement and close were so arranged as to form no interruption to the more sacred domestic duties, and to leave ourselves and our families at rest by midnight—or whether habit has indeed so confused and forced our tastes, that the hours after that period, do really constitute the most agreeable and suitable period for social enjoyments, is not surely a question to be raised, among persons, professing at least, to be under training —not by the most agreeable, but by the most healthful and useful life we can lead in this world,—for another state of existence.

But the defence made in favour of the time at which our entertainments take place, is oftener, and with more show of reason, placed on other grounds. It is said, that the ordinary business of life precludes men engaged in it, from partaking of social intercourse at earlier hours: that in the London world, at least, the hours must be influenced by the sitting of the two Houses; and that as in this commercial country, men often have to perform the duties both of the counting-house and of parliament, the sitting of the Commons, at least, must be influenced by their convenience, and consequently, the evening assemblies thrown far back into the night: that all professional men are too much engaged to dine before seven or eight o'clock, and that consequently the season for

evening amusements cannot take place at an earlier hour than that at present established. But after all, it may be doubted, whether it is not to the lateness of our amusements that we owe these late hours of business. Men who have been engaged during the night with the pursuits of pleasure, are not of course able to resume their business at so early an hour on the following day; and if they happen to be influential people, the habits of those with whom they transact it, must bend to their's; hence the *effect* comes to be considered as the *cause;* and we have the incongruous fact established, that men have suffered their recreations to invade the natural hours of business and of rest; and that they have made choice of that period of the day for their amusements, which forces them to expend a double portion of the vital oil, which each man's ordinary calling usually makes so large a demand upon, for the burning of his lamp. It would seem, too, that in this one respect, our habits have retrograded, rather than advanced from those of our ancestors.

It is mentioned, in an account given of a royal entertainment, in some old magazine, that "the King and Queen retired before eleven, but that some of the party kept it up till near twelve!" The hour therefore at which these royal personages,—and we may suppose the most choice of the company,—retired, was one which could do little violence to their ordinary habits of life, even if we include under these, the more sacred domestic duties. Yet it may well be doubted, whether the entertainment was less agreeable, because it ended at the period when our social amusements are about to begin.

But supposing this to have been the case, supposing that the hours after midnight are really more suitable to purposes of enjoyment; surely it must be our object so to arrange our pleasures, that they shall not invade our duties; not, our duties, so as to meet our pleasures.

The next evil involved in our social amusements, and the one perhaps most to be deprecated, is, the grave importance attached to them—that they are not, in short, (if the term has been properly defined) *recreations*. This grave importance, this busy anxiety attached to our amusements, must be very striking to those, who engaged in the busy scene, do yet preserve their wits sufficiently, to be aware that "it is all play," or who look on the scene from a distance, when the sun has risen on Titania's banquet. Yet in respect of the external cares involved by our present fashionable recreations, it must be acknowledged that we have advanced far beyond the age of our ancestors; when ladies were frequently doomed to spend a whole day with head dressed, in expectation of the evening's entertainment, or when a lady would be propped up in an easy chair all night, that she might not derange her coiffure for the party of the following evening;—the days, in short, of hoops and stiff stays, and powder and toques, of swords and bags, and embroidered coats, when the entertainments were probably as heavy and fatiguing as the preparations made for them.

Still a stranger to our modern entertainments would probably be surprised, on a first introduction, at the want of *gaiety* which pervades them. In spite of splendid apartments, brilliant lights, flowers, pictures, statuary,

crowds of well-dressed people, beauty, youth, and grace, —some element of enjoyment seems to be wanting. There is none of what French people call *laisser aller*; little that is *riant*, and less that is social, in these scenes. The guests have usually a self-absorbed air, as if they had assembled, not for the purpose of amusement, but to perform a part, which each one is anxious to sustain to the best of his powers, and in which, it is requisite to move, and talk, and dress, as like each other as possible. It is perhaps, the want of an *object* which renders many of our large social meetings so dreary. If a number of persons meet together, they ought certainly to have some definite and common object of amusement; there is a something humanizing and satisfactory in the temporary union of purpose so afforded; and it has a tendency to awaken some of the gentler sympathies, and to suspend individual selfishness. Hence it is, that to lovers of music, a concert affords so agreeable and suitable an entertainment; and if some of the distinguished persons who throw open their mansions for such a purpose, would be more select in their choice of performers, so that no person of known bad character should be admitted to the privilege of appearing in their saloons, a real benefit would be conferred on society, and a certain degree of moral influence exerted over the members of the musical and dramatic profession. As we advance in civilization, there will probably be less of display, and more attention to the real purposes of recreation in our habits of society; and therefore large reunions, except for some such definite object of general interest, will be likely to cease. In fact, the inclination seems to be growing in London,

for smaller and more select gatherings,—small parties, in the early part of the evening, before the established gaiety of the night begins, (joining perhaps those who had met at dinner,) when a tea table breaks the formality of the scene, and forms the resort of conversational groups: and these are among the most agreeable and rational modes of social intercourse which London affords. Scientific soirées form another mode of social intercourse, well-suited to the intelligence of the age, though they are too apt to lose their original character, and to assume the nature, and exhibit the display of a mere crowded assembly.

It is however to the social amusements more especially appropriated to *young* people, in this part of our nineteenth century, that I wish particularly to call attention; and for these, I think several requisitions should be made. In the first place, they should exclude as much as possible, anxiety and forethought, and involve no essential sources of disquiet or annoyance: for if our pleasures leave behind them feelings akin to the painful realities of life, they afford none of that refreshment to the spirits which seems to be the legitimate purpose of all amusement. Next, they should not be such as are calculated to awaken, or to foster, unworthy passions, or to do violence to gentle and retiring natures. And finally, they should give no advantage to the young of one sex over the other. It is, I believe, from some of the sources here alluded to that arise those dangers and temptations which thoughtful people so much deprecate for their children, in the amusements of the world; and not out of these recreations themselves, if they be wisely and sparingly timed, and not unduly prolonged. And we

cannot but reflect that in discussing this subject as christian parents, that when we expose ourselves or our children, to temptation and difficulty, *in the service of pleasure*, we can scarcely look for divine aid to extricate us. Our business in life as Christians,—our high calling, and future destination,—pledge us to the best development and cultivation of all our faculties, intellectual and moral. This education may be going on through the hours of suspended employment, and during the enjoyment of social recreation, but not amidst a life of pleasure;—not amidst pleasures which involve the evils just deprecated,—because their joys and sorrows are *unreal*, i. e. they are self-imposed, and belong to the *service* of pleasure, not to its legitimate enjoyment as God's gift for the innocent purposes of amusement.

This seems a serious introduction to so light an inquiry as that concerning the youthful amusements of the nineteenth century. But the truth is, that neither the games of infancy, nor the pleasures of youth, are beneath the attention of those in whose hands their training has been placed by Providence; since their moral growth,—the development in them of good or evil,—takes place perhaps the most rapidly under these influences.

The amusement supposed to be most exclusively connected with youth and enjoyment, is that of dancing. And it might be imagined that one apparently so simple and harmless could scarcely lie open to objection. And yet it can hardly be denied, that a Ball does involve most, or all of the elements which have just been alluded to, as inconsistent with the legitimate purposes of amusement. It will not be admitted by many, who yet

feel its truth, that a Ball to a young London lady, is the most anxious event of the week,—anxious too, not merely in the sense of anticipated *pleasure*. For though to a young person who is in the habit of frequenting such entertainments, each individual ball is, or may happen to be, a less anxious event, than it can be to one who goes out seldomer,—this is simply because it has become more entirely a business of life, and because she has worn off certain feelings, and overcome certain obstacles, which stood in the way of her enjoyment. Yet it still remains as a curious fact, that a meeting for the enjoyment of an exhilarating and almost juvenile amusement, should be so contrived, as to involve more grave and careful thought, than almost any other we are acquainted with. And the scene itself exhibits evidence of this fact. There is much beauty and grace to attract the eye, mingled with a good deal of excitement, much seriousness, more consciousness, but little *gaieté de cœur*;—with nothing in fact to justify the exercise, or to impel the belief that those light forms which move with such unerring propriety through the mazes of the dance, find much enjoyment in the amusement itself, beyond the consciousness of acquitting themselves with propriety*.

In spite of the unpopularity of the undertaking, I wish to invite a little more investigation into the subject of this recreation; and I do it with the less scruple,

* Dancing with the appearance of enjoyment,—with real *gaieté de cœur*,—would in fact, be considered *vulgar*. And perhaps, the innocent *abandon* belonging naturally to the exercise, is unsuitable to the mixed and crowded assemblies at which it is practised.

both because I am conscious of no want of sympathy in the pleasures of my young countrywomen, and because I think that the whole construction of this amusement wants remodelling, before it can be pronounced a suitable or wholesome recreation.

Among the objections which are at present involved in it, I will mention in the first place its *publicity*. Surrounded by a promiscuous crowd of spectators, the young débutantes must feel, that they are themselves part and parcel of the spectacle; that their dress, their dancing, and their general appearance, are unsparingly criticised by persons known and unknown to them. The feelings attending this exposure, do, I am aware, subside before the end of the first season, even among young people who have been heard to acknowledge, that they trembled at a first début from head to foot, and that though this feeling wore off in the course of the evening, it was felt anew at the opening of every Ball. But I think it may be shown, that this fact of the young dancers being, in their own persons, and for their personal appearance, dress, and dancing, objects of admiration or of disapprobation, does of itself involve many important consequences.

It has been said, however, that persons who object to dancing on the score of publicity and exhibition, ought to feel the same objection to young persons *singing* in company. But the same objection does not hold good with both; because the object of each is as totally different as is the degree of exhibition implied. The Dancer is occupied with the idea of *pleasing*, not of giving pleasure: for she knows that it is not merely her dancing, but her person, dress, and air, that are the subjects of criti-

cism, of approval or disapprobation, to the people around her; and that if these do not please, her dancing will neither afford gratification to others, or, unless under particular circumstances, obtain partners for herself. On the other hand, the object of the *Singer* is to *give* pleasure. If a young person sings and plays well, she knows that she is contributing to the real enjoyment of others; and she may well endure, or rather forget, the slight personal exhibition which it involves, for so legitimate a purpose. I say, slight personal exhibition; for she must feel, unless she is very silly, that people who really like her performance, are thinking of her music, and not of herself. Her taste for music, it may be supposed, has been cultivated very much with a view to *give* pleasure, as well as to enjoy it; and though vanity and paltry motives may mix themselves up with her efforts to amuse, and conceit or ill-nature mar their pleasing effect, these faults are not legitimately connected with it.

The next objection which I think lies against balls, arises from the anxieties which they involve to young people, in respect of their persons, dress, and dancing. In respect of their persons, because the power of enjoying the amusement of dancing itself, depends very much on their real or supposed personal attractions. In respect of their dress, because dress,—made altogether a matter of too much importance in society,—is nowhere a subject of such anxious thought, as in connection with these entertainments, since, as we often hear mothers and chaperons declare, "*avoir succès*, a young lady's dress must be in some way or other *distinguée*." To a young person indeed, who goes frequently to dances,

and whose allowance is limited, the expenses of dress, and dancing appurtenances, are considerable enough to form a subject of anxious attention. They absorb in fact all her resources, and too often oblige her to leave the claims of charity unattended to. Even where the means of expenditure are large, still, as the expensiveness of dress is almost unlimited, and the temptations to indulge in it increase with the habit of attention to personal adornment which the fashionable social enjoyments of young people foster,—those means are usually taxed to the utmost, and the greater power of choice frequently involves, if not so much serious,—certainly as much frivolous—anxiety.

But this is only the beginning of troubles. Nicely dressed, and finished to the approving eye of her chaperon, the young votary of pleasure must feel quite sure of her dancing, of her knowledge of the figures danced, and also of her own presence of mind, for she is not to join a light-hearted band, among whom a false step or mistake in her part would occasion only a good-natured banter, but a set of dancers among whom it is really a *faux pas*, which may produce a permanent effect on her pleasures. I remember not very long ago a young person rather distinguished in her own circle, who on making her first début in London, at a large assembly in one of our fashionable mansions, happened to commit one of these unfortunate errors. It was spoken of thus, I remember: "Poor Miss —— broke down at —— House last night! did you hear? such an unfortunate failure! she will never get over it." I was at a loss to understand immediately the nature of this failure.

The young lady had been out, it seemed, in the figure of a quadrille, and put her set out,—a grave offence, which, as predicted, she did not easily get over. And certainly, if young people commit themselves to the scrutiny of a multitude, they should take care to enact their parts with unerring accuracy. But this is not *recreation*. The possibility of such an occurrence imparts a character of importance and anxiety to an amusement delightful and healthful only in its accompanying *light*-heartedness.

There are, however, other and graver cares connected with a ball, than those we have alluded to, which impart to it a serious frivolity, and rob it of all really social elements, and simplicity of purpose. Well-dressed, well-introduced, mistress of the science of dancing, and self-possessed in the practice,—the young débutante is nevertheless far from security in the prospect of her evening's amusement. Much depends on her personal attractions, more on her being the fashion in the circle to which she belongs, and much still, on sundry frivolous and scarcely tangible circumstances. Hence arise temptations to vanity and self-conceit, to jealousy or discontent, which impart a dangerous character to the entertainment. It may be said, that the seeds of such faults lie, after all, in the mind itself, and not in any particular amusement. This is true: the seeds of *all* evil do lie in the mind; but is it wise to expose such seeds to an influence which has a direct tendency to expand and ripen them?

There is still another evil involved in this amusement, viz. that it gives the sexes unequal advantages;

and that the disadvantage unfortunately falls on the female sex, and compromises that dignity and delicacy which ought to be so carefully guarded, in an intercourse with young men. By the arrangements or construction of this class of entertainments, young women are placed in a false position with regard to the other sex, inasmuch as they are dependent on the young *men* present, for the amusement of the evening. It may be said, that this dependence is mutual, since the power of refusal rests with young ladies. But though, as a whole, there is this mutual dependence, so that a ball cannot take place, unless both sexes consent; yet when the parties meet, they are by no means individually on equal terms; for the gentlemen of the party are fully conscious, that those young ladies only, who are sought *by them*, can share in the amusement; so that the power of influencing or suppressing their amusement for the evening, does in fact rest with them.

Now though we may be quite sure that this power will never be generally exercised, yet we know that in individual cases it is continually made use of. For example, if a young lady goes to a ball, it is certainly with a view to enjoy the pleasure of dancing; but, as the power of selection rests in the hands of the gentlemen of the party, if she happens not to be much acquainted with the set she meets, if she be not considered attractive, or fashionable, or agreeable, or any of those things which constitute what is called, in modern phrascology, a nice girl, she is exposed to the mortification not only of sitting down all the evening, but of feeling and knowing that others perceive her to be in the awkward and embarrassing

position, of one unsought among her young compeers. I have called it *mortification,* because even though it might happen that she did not wish to dance that evening, still, as her sitting down implies neglect in the mind of others, she is exposed to feel, or to be supposed to feel, that the amusement of her evening rests in the hands of the young men around her! At all events she knows, that *they* feel this; and she hears her young companions boast of being engaged to dance so many deep, as a thing evidently exciting to their vanity: for they forget the fact, which circumstances have pressed upon her attention, viz. that they too are in reality equally dependent on the other sex, for their evening's entertainment.

I have dwelt on this subject, because it is connected particularly with the amusement under discussion, and involves in it many of the evils which I have deprecated in the entertainments of young people, and especially those elements of worldliness, which are so injurious to their characters. It would seem that there could be little to excite worldly feelings, in an amusement so simple and youthful as dancing: but unfortunately it will be found, I fear, that the pleasures of a ball to young people depend very much on the adventitious circumstances of their condition, their position in life, their personal attractions, dress, &c. For a ball-room has some resemblance to the world at large. Grace and beauty, rank and wealth, command to a certain degree, success in both; but if a young lady dresses well, dances well, is well introduced, and goes out constantly, especially if her father gives dinners, and her

mother, balls, she too, with very ordinary personal advantages, will usually secure a fair portion of it, though somewhat more anxiously.

There are indeed other circumstances, under which this dependence on the other sex may happen to be little practically felt; for instance, at a ball where ladies are scarce, when the only requisitions will be that a young person shall be neither frightful nor very awkward, to ensure her evening's amusement. Still, under the most favourable circumstances, the fact remains, that an undue power over the pleasures of young women is, for the evening, lodged in the hands of the other sex, not as companions selected by ourselves, but as the chance members of such or such an assembly, and very often equally unknown to our entertainers.

There is another unpleasant fact arising out of this false position in which the sexes are placed with respect to this particular amusement, that the emptiest coxcomb, who has any position in society, has it in his power, under certain circumstances, to mortify the most charming girl in the room, by subjecting her to his caprices. Modern novelists have taken up so fruitful a theme of interest; and every one's own recollection will furnish her with numerous examples of this fact, when the power has been exercised. And yet how few fall within the notice of the most attentive observer, in comparison with those which actually occur! I remember going out with a young lady many years back, who possessed every advantage which an attractive person and good position in society afford; I knew that she depended on dancing with a particular person, by whom she had been accus-

tomed to be engaged; and I was a painful witness of the mortification she felt, when he passed her with a simple greeting, and by some unaccountable caprice, did not ask her. This was not all; for as she happened (a rare circumstance with her) not to be sought by any other person, she passed a dull evening, exposed to an annoyance from which young people should be especially protected in their intercourse with the other sex.

Chaperons are, I fear, too ready to compromise the dignity and delicacy of their young charges on these occasions. I remember hearing one chaperon lady say to another, who had a young daughter with her, and was placed rather retired from view, "Why do you not move forwards? poor Miss C. will never have a chance of dancing if she sits there; no one can see her." "But," said I, "Miss C. is known to be here tonight. Cannot the gentlemen of her acquaintance seek her out?" "Oh, young men are so lazy, they do not take the trouble to look about them." On remarking how many sweet-looking girls were sitting down, while women so inferior had been dancing all the evening: "Do you not know," she said, "that those three plain women are heiresses? they are always sought: and Lady C. G., on account of her father's position, and the Misses E. and F. because their parents give dinners."

These are some of the worldly elements connected with this amusement; but they are far from the greatest evils which it involves. I was acquainted with two young friends who lived together, and went out together, equally well introduced, equally fond of dancing, equally agreeable, and equally amiable, one of whom, having consider-

able personal attraction, was always able to enjoy the pleasures of a ball; the other constantly sat down, unless some kind friend or connection took compassion on her. She found out at last that this was no amusement for her, and we may hope and suppose that it was, under such circumstances, a very imperfect one to her companion also. The hostess who troubles herself about the amusement of her young guests, will sometimes be heard to say to some of her young male friends, "Do let me introduce you to so-and-so; she has not been dancing yet." "No, thank you, I do not mean to dance this set;" or, "I scarce ever dance." "Oh, but do oblige me; I shall really take it as a favour," &c. &c. One blushes for the delicacy of a young person so compromised!

These are a few specimens of the evils (every one's experience will supply many more) to which this amusement, as it is at present conducted, does expose our young daughters, in connection with that temporary dependence on the other sex for their pleasures, which practically involves so much that is unpleasant to their feelings, and unsuitable to the maintenance of the dignity and delicacy which it must be our desire to preserve. It may be said that I have looked on the grey side of the picture. I reply, that the amusements of youth ought to have no grey side. There are trials and anxieties enough in real life; and it is the object of amusement to suspend these: but if in so doing it substitutes others, it can be no suitable,—no real recreation.

Are there then no means of arranging an amusement so agreeable, so innocent in itself, so suited to the

temperament of youth, as the exercise of dancing, in such a manner as to exclude the evils deprecated, and especially that of placing young women in so false a position with regard to the other sex? I have no doubt that if the evils attending the present arrangements come to be generally and adequately felt, a remedy will easily be found, and ways and means suggest themselves. No plan however can be devised such as will render the amusement suitable to large and indiscriminate assemblies: for they involve objections even more serious than those I have stated; among which I have only slightly alluded to one which nevertheless can scarcely be considered unimportant by Parents; viz. that the character of those who are admitted to terms of temporary intimacy with our daughters cannot always be properly known to us, or even to our entertainers, whose object it is to fill their rooms, rather than to select their guests.

In the small social meetings which I am supposing, the lady of the house would select and arrange her dancers; it should be considered suitable for ladies to dance together if they please; it might be so arranged indeed (which would have many advantages) that there should always be one or more lady couples, by which means those who like so agreeable an exercise, might always enjoy it without that unbecoming dependence on the other sex, in which all *are*, practically, at present involved; and the lady of the house would take a more active part in arranging the details of the amusement.

It has been said in reply to such suggestions, that gentlemen would not attend parties so arranged, as to rob them of some of their privileges. This may be *par-*

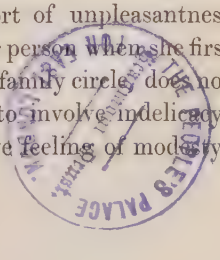
tially true: but I know that there are many young men, who would desire to see their young companions of the other sex placed in a less exceptionable position. At all events it is probable that if they could not meet young women on their own terms, as at present, they would be very glad to see something of them in a less stiff and formal way, than can easily be attained in other social reunions. If not, the evil is not very much to be deplored; young people of different sexes would doubtless find, that there were other means of enjoying some easy intercourse together, and that they are not really dependent for it, on any one set of amusements. And as for those young men who might be so constituted as to deem it unendurable to forego such a privilege as I have been alluding to, *their* absence would be a most important advantage.

It is probable that the Turkish ladies, whose social meetings take place at their baths, would consider themselves utterly debarred from the pleasures of society, should their lord and master issue a decree, forbidding this mode of assembling together,—until some other arrangement, which they might afterwards come to consider much more suitable, had been established.

A few words on the *mode* of dancing may be inserted here. Waltzing, including the Polka, (which however is said to have lost ground in the fashionable world,) though it has almost excluded every other dance, has certainly not yet become thoroughly nationalized among us; since there are still many persons of undoubtedly good taste and judgment, who object to it. And, in matters of taste,—especially in those by which the delicacy of young women can possibly be compromised,—a

minority ought to have its full weight. And it may be thought that young people would do well to avoid any amusement, on the subject of which public opinion is *not uniform*. Gentlemen themselves have frequently been heard to say, "Though I waltz myself, I should not wish to see my daughter or sister waltz, or the woman I might think of for a wife." And we may wonder that the satirical verses of Byron should not have put the thing down for ever in a country so sensitive as ours, with regard to everything which regards the opinions of others.

Still I am quite sure, that numbers of young women, who waltz without an idea of doing that which is inconsistent with most perfect propriety, would give it up, if they perceived the incongruity of adopting an amusement on which there can be a difference of opinion. I know that it is the usual argument of persons who wish to defend waltzing, (and it is a powerful one, because being *offensive*, as well as *defensive*, it must at least silence a young woman, if it does not convince her,) that the real impropriety of waltzing lies in the *mind* of the objector. French ladies use the same invidious argument, against those of other nations, who object to some freedoms of intercourse, which their national manners admit. Now it is difficult to reply to assertion, and to assertion implying greater impropriety in the objector, than she ever thought of attributing to the defender. Those who object, can only reply, that the sort of unpleasantness which is originally felt by a young person when she first waltzes, out of her own immediate family circle, does not appear to our maturer judgments to involve indelicacy, but on the contrary, that instinctive feeling of modesty,



which nature has implanted, and which is developed and directed by different circumstances, by national manners, by domestic habits, and by civilization. Those therefore who have been educated to consider waltzing as part of their vocation—though, on first committing themselves to this whirl under the arm of a stranger, they probably experience the sort of bashfulness I have described,—will make an effort to conquer the feeling; so that the original impression will soon be worn away, and ultimately forgotten. Yet these very young persons, if a gentleman took one of them under the arm to cross a road (unless it were a case of necessity) would feel it an impropriety. Does not this look as if the original feeling were the same? And is it not very questionable whether it be well to overcome such a feeling—trifling though it be—for the *sake of an amusement* which a respectable *minority* do not quite approve of? For, be it observed, the *majority* must always *include* those whom young women would least desire to take for a model.

The alterations which have been suggested in the present mode of conducting the amusement of dancing, and the confining of it to small and select meetings, would certainly secure young women from most of the evil influences which are at present connected with it. This particular recreation, so restricted, might indeed afford less pleasurable excitement,—or rather, a less unwholesome sort of excitement;—but it would include, to those who really enjoy the exercise, what we ought most to seek for in the recreations of young people,—simplicity of purpose, and *social* amusement. I lean upon the term *social*, because I think, that when the enjoyments of the young are truly social, they have a tendency to expand

the benevolent affections, in awakening kindly sympathies; and that they then form by no means a negative portion of the moral training which is going on among them; so that we may under this view, venture to invoke for them that blessing, which can alone ensure either our business or our pleasures from danger.

But I fear, there is a cross influence at work, upon, and spread over, many of our social amusements, and especially over the one now under consideration; an influence, of which it is difficult to speak, though it is impossible to omit it in a consideration of this class of recreations. I fear there is in it more of the anxiety and business of life, than I have yet ventured to place among its acknowledged *cares*;—I fear that one of the gravest of all subjects is involved among them;—that a ball is supposed by mothers to afford the best means of settling their daughters!

Foreigners justly reproach us with the fact, that while we sneer at their *mariages de convenances*, we adopt (too many of us at least) a means towards the same end, by which we essentially compromise both the dignity and delicacy of our daughters and ourselves. I fear the reproach is just; and I think that their mode of settling the alliances which they desire to form, is, if not the best means of securing the happiness of the parties, far less to be deprecated, than that avowed system of match-making, which prevails among ourselves, and which leads so many mothers to make the amusements of their daughters subservient to schemes for establishing them; —often, it may be feared, to make those daughters themselves parties to such schemes.

What can be so injurious to the female character, as this match-making spirit? And how can we be surprised that anxiety and consciousness should so often pervade the manners of young people, when they are aware, that *one* avowed purpose in taking them to balls, is to put them in the way of forming suitable establishments? No wonder that modern novelists have found a fruitful theme for lively satire in this propensity of the age. They have indeed scarcely caricatured it; for the very language of mothers and chaperons would fully bear them out. Often have I heard the following class of expostulations directed to a lady whose daughters did not happen usually to attend this class of amusements. How could she expect that they would ever settle? what a hardship to deprive them of advantages which a ball-room offered beyond any other! "But I do not wish," she replied, "that they should attend any social meeting, with such a view. If they are sought by suitable persons, in the common course of life, they will marry; if not, they will I trust be happy and useful members of society as single women: but at all events they will not go to balls for the purpose of seeking an establishment." Such young persons were of course much compassionated. In fact the *duty* of taking our daughters to this class of amusements is so generally acknowledged, that the only excuse which I have ever seen admitted as valid is, the declaration that you consider all dancing as absolutely sinful, which is, of course, accepted as decisive.

To discuss so grave a subject as that of marriage in connection with the amusements of young people, would seem perfectly incongruous, had not the manners of the

age insensibly linked them together; and enlisted this recreation of dancing, more than any other, in the service of careful and business-like designs; making it an exciting and anxious amusement. It is indeed an evil, though a minor one, that this match-making spirit, exposes those who attend balls simply as an entertainment, to the annoyance of being suspected of similar views. It must be acknowledged too, that this amusement under its present arrangements,—which involve an intercourse so exclusive as to be often wholly unsuitable to the degree of previous intimacy or knowledge of each other's character which the parties possess,—does give rise to the habit of flirting, and not unfrequently, to the unfounded charge of doing so; a charge not seldom made by young persons, who feeling how much importance would be involved to *themselves* in this intercourse, are led to suppose that others are engrossed by the same careful thoughts, during their temporary connection with their partners. The term flirting is indeed often very foolishly and inappropriately applied to any two persons of the opposite sexes, who are engaged in earnest conversation. Such language is very much to be deprecated; since the imputation involved by it, tends to interrupt that pleasant intercourse between young unmarried people, which is justly esteemed the privilege of our pure moral habits. That there is such a thing as flirting, no one can deny; and it is not very hard to discriminate; for it carries external marks of vanity, egotism, and a desire to engross the exclusive attention of the person who is the object of it; though it is less easy to describe. But this freedom of intercourse which I have alluded to, however agreeable, can never be advantageous

to young women, when they are exposed by it to the danger of forming acquaintance whose characters and pretensions are unknown to their parents, and very slightly, if at all, to their entertainers. The most fashionable, and, as they are called, select assemblies, those of Almack for instance, are least of all secure from this danger; as many a parent knows to his cost, when an undesirable alliance is formed in consequence of such meetings, between persons, whose paths might not otherwise ever have crossed.

The subject of dancing being dismissed, there is an amusement remaining to be considered, in its relation to ourselves, which, in its own nature, and in connection with those whom we may collectively call our neighbour, —has already been discussed;—I mean theatrical entertainments; and it is to be inquired how far they may be, as now constituted, harmless, to those who are protected from their incidental evils.

The principal objections to them have been already considered under the first and second requisitions; and these are such, no doubt, as to affect young people of both sexes, though by far the most—young men. For though even under their present form, these amusements may in their immediate effects prove harmless to numbers who frequent them, yet it is a fearful thing to have poison mixed up with our pleasures: and it can scarcely be, that very frequent repetition should not, in some way or other, develope this poison. How far, under the best regulations and under a thorough reformation, these amusements might be found too absorbing and exciting to particular temperaments, or how

frequently they might with safety be indulged in, must always be a subject of individual consideration. With regard to the ballets, which have been alluded to before, they are so generally considered an unpleasant exhibition, that there only wants some high and influential manifestation of disapproval, to put them down for ever. Women will not, I suspect, long endure, to see feats of dancing, however wonderful, performed by women unsheltered beneath the ordinary drapery of their sex. Habit alone can have reconciled, or rather accustomed them, to such a scene.

Private theatricals exclude some, perhaps most, of the evils connected with the public stage; but they have evils of their own, which are very generally appreciated; and which, together with the large cost of time and thought expended on them, and the talent required to render them tolerable, will probably ever prevent their general adoption. The representation of well-chosen scenes has succeeded better, and is less open to objection; and the same may be said in respect of acting proverbs, and other games; all of which require care in their selection and management, and are suited only to a private and intimate circle.

I have now gone through the list of our principal social amusements, dwelling most, as most important, on those connected with the younger members of society. But I have not mentioned, or at least have only slightly alluded to, one grave evil connected with them, viz. the quantity of *time* actually consumed in these pleasures; both because it is an evil which does not arise imme-

diately out of the pleasures themselves, and because it is an individual concern, and a concern not always under our own control, especially as young people. Once however impressed with the danger involved—not only in a life, but in a season—devoted to pleasure, or a mind engrossed by it, and we shall either find means of escape, or we shall *watch* for them,—the next best position to take up. With respect to those who *have* the power of living to themselves, it is difficult, almost impossible, to draw any line of direction; since the mode of life which may be harmless to one temperament, might be dangerous to another; and that which one set of circumstances might authorize, would be wrong under the opposite. But if we keep the *point of sight* steadily in view, we shall find our lines verge towards it, and our perspective, at least, will be right.

On this slight and imperfect review of the principal amusements belonging to that portion of the nineteenth century, in which we live, and especially of those connected with the younger members of society,—it will probably be felt by persons who go along with, and are disposed to amplify for themselves the observations I have ventured to make,—that they do involve a considerable portion of evil,—that they are not altogether compatible with some of our christian duties, nor are such as might be expected from our advanced civilization. The subject indeed is one of great importance in its connection with the younger members of society, whose temperaments make the largest demand on pleasure. Let us at least claim for them, as for ourselves, that our

recreations shall be so regulated, as to suspend only, and not invade or break up, the serious purposes of life,—and that they shall be recognized and felt as recreations, and not as the grave business of our existence; so that we may be, in our enjoyment of pleasure, not less, but more, like children.

A writer of the present day, following the example of our divine Teacher, has made the example of children * beautifully available for our instruction and imitation. May we not venture to carry forward this analogy into the seasons of our recreation? A benevolent earthly parent will look with kindly interest on his children in their hours of play. He knows that such enjoyments are healthful for their temperaments, and calculated to expand their moral qualities: he is solicitous only, that their games shall not be such as to involve unnecessary temptation, or to develope and strengthen the evil which belongs to their nature; and if they become anxious and excited, he gently reminds them that they *are at play*. But the child plays not the less heartily, because he is conscious that his loving parent,—or the friend who represents that parent,—is by: and often are the play-things flung down for a moment, while the trustful child starts up to kiss that gentle brow which is bent so kindly upon him. So I think it should be with us and our loving Father,—"who is not far from any one of us." Oh much less than children in his sight! why should not our hearts be ever ready to seek Him, even in the midst of our lightest amusements? And it would be so, if there were no conscious taint of sin and evil in the

* Essay on the Example of Children, by Archbishop Whately.

pleasures which we enjoy. Like children in the presence of their earthly parent, we should then feel only more happy and more light-hearted, in the thought that He is near,—for, in that consciousness, we should feel ourselves safe!

CHAPTER VII.

INFLUENCE OF FASHION.

OUR connection with Society, or "the World," involves other influences besides those which arise out of our recreations: influences which constitute, perhaps, some of its greatest dangers, since they have a tendency to supply a false code of morals, to confuse our individuality, and to destroy the practical character of our religious convictions. I allude to those influences connected with what has been called, the Fashionable World, or, to speak in the abstract,—of Fashion, that mysterious oracle, to whose decrees Royalty itself submits, and whose voice, in its fainter echoes, is heard in our market-places, and transmitted to the remotest hamlets of this great empire. Laying aside figures of speech, we may trace this unseen influence with tolerable certainty, to a more tangible origin,—viz. to a clique of persons in society, whose birth, wealth, or station lend some credit to their decisions on matters of taste, and who possess at the same time sufficient tact or talent to give to these decisions a sort of currency. Sometimes a spurious influence of this sort will be obtained by an individual possessing the talent of recommending himself to such a clique of persons, and through their medium, of originating a fashion,—not unfrequently of becoming a sort

of despot to his protectors—an *imperium in imperio*,—as was the unfortunate Beau Brummel. We see, by its etymology,—*façon*, something made or fashioned,—how the word came to be adopted. The habits, mode of dressing, of living, &c. adopted by certain persons and imitated by others, were called their fashions; and those who adopted these fashions (*façons*), were called, as well as those who originated them, fashionable people.

In less advanced stages of society than our's, refinement of life and manners would be found almost exclusively among the highest classes: and people at all connected with these, would naturally fashion themselves on the models to which they looked up; while they, in their turn, would influence the circle of which they formed a portion; so that fashion may be supposed to have ministered, in its season, to the civilization and refinement of mankind. But unfortunately, as the religious and moral habits of the higher classes have not always kept pace with their progress in refinement, fashion has almost always acted injuriously on the character of the age, by exhibiting that which all men are disposed to like and value, *i. e.* good breeding and the polished habits of life, apart from higher endowments. We might consequently expect that the decrees of fashion, which are in many instances wholly *arbitrary*, and adopted, in fact, because they *are* arbitrary—as a badge of adherence to the society which originates them,—would involve even more general and lasting evil, than we find to be the case. But fashion is, *par excellence*, capricious and ephemeral; as soon, therefore, as anything introduced by her becomes really *general*, it ceases to be fashionable,

though in ceasing to be fashionable, it does not always cease to exist; on the contrary, if it receives the sanction of public opinion, it drops from the ranks and patronage of fashion, and takes its place as an established custom.

Here then, we seem to find a remedy for some of the evils alluded to. Fashion being herself a sort of spurious public opinion, she is often obliged to yield to the true one,—to the collective voice *i. e.* of society at large. And the circumstances of the present age (as has been remarked) afford such prompt expression and circulation of tastes and sentiments, that this great public censor is enabled to exercise a wholesome control over his shadowy representative. So controlled indeed, it is conceivable that fashion herself might exercise, not only a harmless, but a useful influence in certain matters, which, as they link society together, cannot be wholly disregarded. But is it so? Has the fashionable world itself been acted on by the general advance of intelligence and civilization, of morality and religious zeal, or has it remained stationary, and unchanged, amid the manifold alterations which have been going on around it up to this middle of the nineteenth century? It will be found probably to have partaken in some degree of the general movement, so that its relations with the world at large are very much altered, and extended;—that the general increase of intelligence and cultivation has found its way into the highest ranks of society, while their elegance and refinement, have, in return, been more than equally diffused through those below them. The fashionable world of the present day then, is no longer an exclusive

clique in society; it consists of a large number of persons,—not solely of those whose birth or wealth must at all times form its *matériel*,—but of all who belonging to the gentry of the country, are introduced into its circles by persons of consideration, and can bring some claim or recommendation, real or supposed, personal or mental, which shall make them acceptable. The exclusiveness of fashionable society has thus been in a great degree broken up, both in our own country and (more entirely) in France,—the inevitable consequence of the higher state of civilization to which our two nations have arrived. It is certain, that a state of society in which persons possessing merit, talent, education and refinement, are excluded, solely on account of some arbitrary decision of unfitness, such as inferiority of birth, of wealth, or of race, must be very backward in point of civilization. And this appears to be the case pretty equally, in two States whose institutions are so generally opposed as those of Austria and America; the one belonging to the old *régime*—the other boasting the entire freedom of its institutions,—but both suffering under the same petty tyranny of exclusiveness with respect to their world of fashion.

Mrs. Trollope, in her praises of Austrian civilization, and the advantages of its aristocratic institutions, alludes to a circumstance, which is doubtless a consequence of those institutions, viz. the pleasing familiarity which exists between the highest and lowest classes, who as they cannot by possibility cross each other's path, may safely treat each other with easy and friendly courtesy; while among those who are brought in contact with each other,

whose birth and fortune are more nearly on a level, and their education and refinement the same,—the utmost exclusiveness prevails: an exclusiveness, which, if her account be true, no merit, talent or elegance, united to ordinary good birth and wealth, can break through: a *crême* within *crême* carrying out the principle of rejection as far as it will go. That a similar state of things should exist in America, where distinctions of rank are unknown, is very remarkable. Yet their most intelligent and patriotic writers dwell on the fact of this petty system of exclusion,—these circles within circles,—as existing to a degree quite unknown among ourselves, and arising doubtless from that desire of arbitrary distinctions, which is so flattering to the self-love of an imperfect state of civilization, especially where real distinctions of rank are not recognized. The exclusion of people of colour, even of mixed race, however intelligent, refined, and accomplished, from their society, is a still more extraordinary development of this principle by the inhabitants of the new world.

But to return to our own improved state of society. In consequence of its having become less exclusive, and enjoying a wider range of intercourse with mankind at large, the world of fashion has fallen much more under the influence of public opinion, and has partaken, consequently, of the general improvement. Not only has it become more cultivated and intelligent; but a more correct tone of morals, and more general attention to religious ordinances, are visible in its circles,—have become in short the fashion. This very phrase, however, *have become the fashion*,—points out a most dangerous

principle in fashionable life, which forms the bond of union between its members, and which may be expressed by the word *assimilation*;—an assimilation of tastes, habits, and sentiments, which is founded, not on any, even supposed, merit in them,—still less on the suffrage of the wise or good,—but on the arbitrary distinctions of fashion; so that the persons, whoever they may happen to be, from whom this attribute is supposed to emanate, are practically allowed to decide on some of the most important points of conduct. Not only must we eat, drink, sleep, and chuse our recreations and their seasons, in conformity with this law, but our very opinions and sentiments also are to be subjected to its rule. Foolish and frivolous we might call this voluntary bondage, if it did not involve greater evils than folly or frivolity. Yet there is no doubt that it does sometimes lend itself to good moral influences; for that which is right may happen to be fashionable also: but still the great evil remains, that it is adopted, not because it is right, but because it is fashionable; and the very apparent advantage of this assimilating principle, viz. the harmonizing effect of a general conformity of opinions, tastes, and habits, can be obtained only by a surrender,—not merely of some which are bad and foolish, but of many which are wise and good also. Now is it not this very surrender, which involves that "conformity to the world," against which the Apostle has warned us, and which more than any other principle perplexes and endangers our path?

There is, perhaps, always danger in taking our tone from the society with which we happen to be connected, —be it with the world of fashion, the world of science,

or the world of business; lest we should find ourselves conforming to the habits and sentiments of others, not because they approve themselves to our judgment, as moral and religious, but because they are the habits and sentiments of those who are fashionable,—or scientific, —or acute and respected men of business. But this danger is more insidious in connection with the fashionable world, than in those other relations with our fellow-creatures. The purposes for which men associate together in scientific pursuits, or in those of business, are clearly defined; mutual interest in a given subject, or in such as are immediately connected with it, is the bond of union: they may differ on all other points, and they do not usually seek to influence each other on any other. But our connections with "society," or "the world," involve *all* our individual concerns: and it may be well to go a little more into detail, concerning the petty, as well as the serious, cares and responsibilities, which the assimilating principle I have spoken of, lays upon those who belong to the fashionable world. I take up such as appear most frivolous, in order that it may be seen how much latent evil lurks among them.

To maintain our proper (or improper) place in society, —*i. e.* in the circles of what we call fashionable life,— to keep up the numbers on our visiting-list, in order that we may fill our own mansions, and add our persons to the throng assembled in the saloons of others,—to entertain our acquaintance, *properly*, i. e. not according to our own means, and in harmony with our ordinary habits of life, but according to their expectations, and to the mode of entertainment adopted by persons of

good style ; to do as others do, to speak, look, and dress, after the fashion, not of those our own judgment and taste approve, but of those who are esteemed most fashionable in the society to which we belong,—and to repress every manifestation of taste and sentiment which may be considered *mauvais ton*,—all these are among the self-involvèd, but eating cares, which not only injure our independence of character, and dignity of mind, and destroy our individuality,—making one person's life and manners the type of another's,—but also involve us in the commission of acts of the greatest injustice. To run into debt, to reduce our tradesmen to distress, to put our servants to inconvenience by an irregular discharge of their wages, to neglect the calls of charity and of kindred, to involve our children in future adversity, or to neglect their present claims,—these are among the temptations to which we expose ourselves by the self-imposed necessity of *doing as others do*,—not as the wise and good do, but as the world does,—that part of the world at least, by which we are influenced, and to which we still give the almost worn-out name of, "fashionable world." Nor are the very persons whose wealth and position would seem to raise them above all fear of losing caste by non-conformity, more independent in their habits than those less favourably placed. There is still the same assimilating principle at work. They too, must do as others of their own rank and pretensions do.

If an inhabitant of another planet, or of some remote corner of the earth, were to visit any one of the most distinguished cities of civilized Europe in this nineteenth century, perhaps, when his first emotions of wonder at

the novelty of every thing he saw, were worn off, one of the first things that would strike him, would be the subserviency of the rich, the great,—those who should seem to have most liberty of action—to some unknown power, some hidden law, to which they were all slaves. He would hear the constant remark, "One *must* get such and such an article of dress:" "One *must* have one's house furnished in such and such a manner:" "One *must* dine at such an hour," &c. The question would naturally occur to our stranger, "Why *must* you? What law is there that compels you to do so many things, some of them troublesome, and involving expense or inconvenience, or to abstain from other things perfectly innocent?" The answer would generally be, "Oh! every one does it,"—or, "It is the proper thing,"—"It is *mauvais ton*, or *a bad style* to do so and so,"—which answers, would, it is needless to observe, leave the inquirer as wise as he was before.

In one sense, the expression "*everybody* does it," is manifestly incorrect when applied to a fashion: for a thing which, literally, *every one* does, is, as I have remarked, not a fashion, but a custom. No one would say, it is "the fashion" in England to drink tea; though such an expression would be quite correct if applied to some parts of the continent, in which tea-drinking is gradually becoming usual among *fashionable* people, but is not universal. Again, waltzing is in England a *fashion*; in Germany it is a national custom. The supremacy of fashion, as has been remarked, is founded on the principle of assimilation. But if the law of assimilation binds the members of the body, the love of singu-

larity very often guides its leaders; hence the caprices and vagaries of fashion, which, often ridiculous in themselves, are merely apish, when servilely copied by others.

These caprices are sometimes imitated, and with peculiarly bad taste, in more private circles. We occasionally meet with a clique of persons, who think proper to assume some whimsical habit, way of speaking, walking, dressing, &c.; but if they are not persons of birth or station, these people will generally be remarked on, merely as ill-bred or ridiculous. If they are distinguished by wealth and rank, however, the case is altered. At the court of Louis XIV. of France, this caprice or love of singularity led the Marquise de Rambouillet, and a small number of her associates, to originate that affected manner of speaking, and tone of sentiment, which Moliere has commemorated in 'Les Précieuses Ridicules.' Now had the members of this coterie been obscure private persons, they would have been laughed at by their neighbours, and there would have been an end of it: but as they were among the noblest and most distinguished of that brilliant court, their caprice became a fashion, and spread rapidly downwards, till the bourgeois themselves were infected with it, and resorted to Scudery's romances for their fashionable vocabulary.

The Euphuism of the time of Elizabeth, and James the First, is another instance of the way in which the follies of the few became a law to the many. And had not the rapid spread of Puritanism among the middle classes proved a check to the conceits of the school of Cowley and Donne, the rage for comparing eyes to burning-

glasses, and two hearts separated to a pair of compasses, might have descended from the court to the city, and from the city to the country. A similar affectation is said to have left permanent traces in the language and literature of Spain, in which this affected and inverted mode of speech has so engrafted itself, as to attach homely, and even ludicrous associations, to the idioms used in familiar conversation, rendering them unfit for employment on grave and dignified subjects: so that natives of Spain have been known to confess, that they could not read the best translations of the Bible in their own language, without being occasionally assailed almost by a sense of the ludicrous.

But it may be objected, Are we then to set fashion in all things at defiance? Is it unworthy of a rational being, or of a Christian, to dress, eat, drink, and live as others do? Certainly not. It would be unfair even to deny, (as we have already said) that fashion has, or has had, its uses; not only because many habits of refinement and elegance have been introduced in this way, but because there is a manifest expediency in the adoption of somewhat similar habits of life, by the people of one country.

If every one were to eat, drink, sleep, and observe the hours he happened to fancy, without any reference to others, the hours of business, as well as of pleasure, would be rendered inconvenient in a thousand ways. As long as a custom is harmless in *itself*, and not injurious to others, it is, in a general way, best to follow it. The late hours for dinner, for instance, are really an evil, but one to which many persons in the present state of society must to a certain degree conform. But if any

of these customs leads to others producing manifest evil either to ourselves, or our neighbours, then, the indulgence of this natural wish to be like others, becomes sinful, and it is our duty to combat it.

The loss of individuality of character, which has already been spoken of in a serious point of view, is also injurious to the agreeableness of social intercourse. Society has become like a smooth shaven lawn. The inequalities have been rubbed down, till one may almost know beforehand, what will be said on any given subject in conversation. To skim lightly over every topic, whether it be the trifling gossip of the day, or subjects connected with the deepest, and most painfully exciting, human interests, with the same conventional and careless air, to weed away every thing like natural animation or feeling, gives to society what some persons call smoothness and grace, others, monotony and vapidity.

But perhaps the most unpleasing and injurious effects of fashionable assimilation, are those produced on the manners of young people. It is generally agreed, that there is nothing so unpleasant as affectation; and certainly nothing is more praised than a natural manner. "If young people are only natural,"—"if girls were but unaffected!" so says the world; and yet with strange inconsistency, this natural manner, which a young person well brought up, brings from her native element—her home,—is very commonly disapproved of when she enters society. "I wish Caroline G. would be more like other people,"—"Lady C. E. would be charming if she had more *l'air de société*,"—"If Miss R-- lived more in the world she would acquire more *savoir faire*, and those originali-

ties of manner would be rubbed off." Now it is true that this *savoir faire* is a convenient accomplishment; yet it may be doubted whether it is so much to be desired for young people, since it is always acquired at the expense of some of the freshness and individuality of youth,—often at the cost of ingenuousness and sincerity. It seems to belong rather to the practised woman of the world, than to the youthful novice. Besides, "to have *l'air de société*," or, to be "like other people," is, our critics forget, utterly incompatible with the naturalness of manner which they profess to admire. How can young people be like others, unless they throw off the manner natural to them,—which marks them *i. e.* as individuals,—and adopt a conventional one; enter a room, speak, laugh, sigh, and admire in the same way? "Rouged cheeks and curled hair," says Bacon, "are better than rouged and curled manners." Now, though the style and manner I allude to would not bear so strict an analogy to his remark, as those which belonged to an earlier part of this century, because they do less violence to nature, as being the result of a better taste and more cultivation of mind, yet they are equally foreign to its truthfulness and simplicity. And this is just the fault of the present age, that a young person is taught to mistrust her own natural manner,—that which results from the mind and character of the individual,—and to adopt that which happens to prevail in society. It is true, that some young people may in this way acquire an artificial smoothness, or a liveliness of manner, in some respects more graceful or agreeable than that which naturally belongs to them; but it is usually a vapid tone

which is thus imparted to what they do and say; and the evident want of trueness and simplicity of purpose, which they manifest, will probably be thought by persons of good taste, as injurious to the manners, as to the character. It is remarkable too, that some of the young persons one meets with in society, whose position in life would qualify them, it might seem, for giving a tone to the manners of their youthful compeers, are distinguished for a graceful simplicity which seldom fails of being appreciated. But after all, the most unexceptionable manner, when *imitated*, loses all its power of charming, along with its truthfulness and individuality.

The first year of a girl's life after coming out, usually stamps her manner in society; for the conventional tone is easily gained, but not so easily lost; the very principle on which it is acquired being one which influences the whole character. If, however, she retain her natural manner, it will be longer in acquiring its own perfection, because it necessarily improves along with her character. Sometimes indeed when the natural manner has been lost, it is recovered after marriage, because fashion permits the manifestation of more individuality in married women: but then its simplicity is not often restored, for the tyranny of fashion is nowhere more thoroughly successful, than in its influence over the character and manner of young women.

I must explain here that I am speaking of *manner*, —not manners, or good breeding; for these must always be, to a certain extent, conventional, and therefore *acquired*, since they depend, a good deal, upon the customs of each age and country; and habits of politeness, *i. e.*

of consideration for others,—which, though not conventional, are not in general natural, excepting to those few who seem to find out as it were by instinct, what is pleasing or displeasing to others,—must be taught to young people, as children; and they should be taught on the highest principles, for they are christian graces; so that a neglect of the *bienséances* of life is less a defect in their manners, than in their morals,—their christian morals.

Such are some of the various influences involved in our connection with the fashionable world, "the world" of society. Man more might be noticed, by persons better initiated into its mysteries: and some of those alluded to, may be thought trifling, and unworthy so much serious notice. But it may be asked, Is any thing trifling which tends to injure the singleness and truthfulness of our characters, to mislead our judgments, and either to set up a false standard of right and wrong in our minds, or to level the true one, which our faith and our moral sense have implanted, down to the point at which the feelings and prejudices of others are disposed to recognize it? If such a kind of conformity to the world be admitted, what becomes of the grave responsibility which is declared to rest with each individual, in respect of his most trifling action? what becomes of our sense of the awful fact, that of every word and deed, we shall have "to give account?"

But there is a subject arising out of the one which we have been discussing, which cannot properly be omitted in a consideration of the influence of fashion on our social customs and relations, though the point I allude to,

having long since received the sanction of public opinion, may be said to have been removed from her influence ;—I mean the so-called code of honour ; by which term is to be understood, I suppose, some tacit agreement on certain points, by which society is to be governed, and a violation of which involves exclusion from it. Every nation has some code of honour; but that by which European nations are governed, appears to have assumed its present character in the days of chivalry, when the knight took a solemn oath to the observance of certain rules, (among which fidelity to his word stood foremost,) and bound himself to do battle against any one who should cast a shade upon his knightly character, or upon the honour of those whom he pledged himself to defend ; be it that of his lady-love, or of any of his connections.

To the influence of chivalry, succeeded that of a small and privileged class in society, to which the name of fashion has been given, and to whose more serious decrees—having for their object the preservation of society from impurity and disorder,—the term *code of honour* has been applied. It is the code by which modern gentlemen are governed ; and certainly we find the ancient Knight not unworthily represented by the true English Gentleman ; the same qualities deemed essential to the one, being supposed to belong as a matter of course to the other. And as in the days of chivalry, to doubt a man's word was to dishonour him, and demanded the penalty of life, or at least of blood, since the courage displayed in avenging the affront could alone restore him to his place in society, so it is still, under the existing code of honour. And this seems to be the real intention of the duellist ; for though the term *demand-*

ing satisfaction, avenging his honour, &c., might seem to imply a desire of vengeance, it has, we must think, but seldom a place among his motives; on the contrary, the injury he is about to inflict, forms, we may well believe, his greatest and most painful compunction.

And here comes in a curious anomaly; truthfulness, for example, is supposed to be essential to the character of a gentleman, and thence to his position in society; but a sort of vicarious substitute for truth, as well as for other qualities, has been found, in this code of honour. If a man has courage to meet his defamer, supposing him charged with falsehood or other misdemeanour considered unbecoming in a gentleman, he is brought in *not guilty* by the court of fashion, or rather of public opinion (for a code not thus sanctioned, could not in these days be sustained), under this code of honour. I have called courage a vicarious substitute for *supposed* misconduct, because a man is not called on to disprove before any select committee of his associates, the charge brought against him, and to claim for that purpose the benefit of their previous knowledge of his character;—if he has *courage* to meet his defamer, all inquiry is at an end; his courage is admitted, not really as a testimony of his innocence, and a proof of the falsity of the charge, but rather as a substitute, a satisfaction to society, which places a bar to all further inquiry on the subject. If physical or moral weakness, or if much higher obstacles, prevent his taking this means of vindicating his character, —he is dishonoured, (unless perchance he has had some opportunity of giving decided proof of his valour,) and excluded from society! Thus the very purpose for which

this code is supposed to have been instituted, is not fulfilled. A man is not proved "not guilty:" the only thing proved, is, that he has courage to meet, and punish his accuser. And the only advantage gained by society, is, that its regulations are protected by the fear of consequences; since conduct considered unbecoming a gentleman, is liable to be so punished, and must be so defended. But the advantage gained by him who has thus given satisfaction, is equivocal; if indeed he be really guilty, he has a twofold advantage, that viz. of having obliged society to hold his character cleared, and of having shown that no man can insult him with impunity: but if he be innocent, he reaps a much smaller benefit; for he stands only in the same position as he would were he really guilty.

It is too well known, indeed, how many professed duellists stalked through society, early in the present century, whose claim to being tolerated in it, rested solely on their known skill and courage. And it is one of the many proofs of our advance in civilization and morality, that such a person would no longer be tolerated in it;—that the having fought a duel, is no longer (in this country) esteemed an honourable distinction; that it is, on the contrary, one which, both he himself and his friends feel, to have been on the whole injurious to him.

But how can we account for the existence of such a code of morality at the present day, and in a community of professing Christians? how understand its being upheld by men who seem on other subjects to manifest a respect for christian ordinances, and christian moral-

ity? The time, we may trust, is approaching, when the christian code of honour will be subordinate to the Scripture rule of life, and when the means taken to maintain it will be more in conformity with the revealed will of the Divine Author of Scripture;—when the character of a gentleman will stand condemned, in so far as he has cast reproach, or is supposed to have cast reproach on it, as a Christian, and is *on that* account fit to be excluded from society; not indeed until he shall have wiped away the stain by blood, but until he shall have given proof that he has acted, or shall have bound himself to act, in conformity to the code by which society itself professes to be governed*. As to the fitness or unfitness of such a man to be received back into society, and the time of such restoration, it would seem not only more becoming in a community like ours, but wiser and more suitable to the present peaceful state of society, to let such matters be judged of by a committee of the leading members of the circle to which a man belongs, and to admit their decision on each case, as a substitute for the bullet of the marksman.

It is indeed to be lamented, that the two classes in society exempt from such a code, should not have been able to cause its extinction; the one by withholding their countenance from it, the other by proving its uselessness; that the conduct of members of the Sacred Profession especially, should ever be such towards each other, (and even towards those they have pledged themselves to honour and respect,) as to cause some fear,

* For an interesting discussion on this point, see "the Southlanders," or Expedition to New Holland, ch. 7.

lest that christian spirit, which should protect society from slander and discourtesy, is not yet sufficiently general, even where we should most expect to find it.

With respect to women, the code of honour rests, as is well known, on a different foundation, and the penalty of transgressing it, is, exclusion from society. But we find a disposition, in the present day, especially in the fashionable world, to consider that there is injustice in so heavy a punishment as that of exclusion, for an offence in which no cognizance is taken of extenuating circumstances, and which is shared with one who escapes the penalty;—an offence too, which is, by supposition, repented of, and followed by a life of virtue*. I think, however, that exception may be taken against the word *punishment*. Society has no right, and probably no inclination, to *punish* any individual; but it has a right to exclude from its ranks those who have broken through the laws of purity which it demands of its female members; (it has no other means of preserving its own external purity;) and yet it is impossible to do so without laying down a rule which may by possibility involve hardship. A woman who has forfeited her virtue, under whatever circumstances of extenuation, *cannot* be restored to the *place* she held in society, even if she were not to be excluded from society itself: and painful circumstances would always be liable to arise to a person so situated, which would make such a partial restoration little to be desired. At the same time it cannot be

* Much greater hardship is in fact inflicted, by that portion of society which has been called the fashionable world, in passing over offences of this description committed by the high-born and admired, which it visits severely in the humbler classes.

doubted, that a woman who has, by her subsequent conduct, given evidence, as far as any one can do so, of her sincere repentance, will always find, among the intimate friends and connections of her own family, and among those with whom she happens to be brought in contact, of a certain age, persons to countenance and be kind to her; for there is a bond of union between Christians, which only actual sin can sever. They know, that if repentant, she is forgiven; and they know how much they too stand in need of forgiveness.

CHAPTER VIII.

ASSOCIATIONS FOR PROMOTING BENEVOLENT AND RELIGIOUS PURPOSES.

The numerous associations for religious and benevolent purposes which the present age has called forth, are among the most pleasing subjects of contemplation which its history presents. These unions of persons belonging to various classes in society, for the promotion of objects unconnected with their own selfish interests, and intended at least, to spread the advantages of education, to diffuse the knowledge of our christian faith, and to alleviate the afflictions of suffering humanity,—are calculated to bind by the holiest ties of fraternity, the heads and hearts of those, who, in "the world" we have been lately considering, could never (on terms of equality at least) have come into contact, —the noble and lowly-born, men of wealth, and men of slender means, men of science and of business, the agriculturist, the tradesman and mechanic,—each lending a portion of the talent, whatever it be, which Providence has committed to him, for the promotion of purposes, in whose success they may hope to rejoice together, at the period when all mere earthly aims and distinctions shall have ceased.

There are other advantages too, in these temporary

unions; the man and woman of high pretensions are brought into contact with the good sense and benevolence, the practical knowledge and well-disciplined minds of their neighbours; while these again are softened and refined by intercourse with those, from whom the circumstances of birth and fortune had separated them.

It does not belong to the present purpose to do more than allude to the vast number of associations which we possess for charitable objects. It has sometimes been thought, that they interfere too much with private charity; but as they usually embrace different objects, or the same objects, on a much more extensive scale, it does not seem likely that the two should interfere with each other. If the former produces larger, more steady, and also more permanent results, as being less dependent on private casualties and private caprice; the latter meets, more satisfactorily, cases of individual distress; while it is certainly more beneficial to our own hearts, inasmuch as it brings us into closer sympathy with our suffering neighbour. There is indeed this relative advantage in our public charities, that they do not offer us any immediate return. No gratitude excites our self-love, no ingratitude damps our benevolent efforts, —we throw our mite into the public treasury, seeking no return, but in the sense of having done our duty. But as it is good also to cultivate the personal sympathies which bind us to our kind, so, private charity, which usually, though by no means constantly, makes the return of gratitude, inasmuch as it bestows direct

and personal relief, is more immediately blessed both to him who gives, and to him who receives.

In protective societies, there is always the danger of invading the rights of one class of people, while attempting to enforce the claims of another, and thus of injuring instead of promoting the general good of the working classes. Still there is usually some abuse, or element of evil, connected with the objects they embrace, which these societies may reach; and they have one important and beneficial effect, viz. that they awaken public attention, and check private abuses, and in this way indirectly produce very important results in favour of the suffering objects of their interest.

In originating or in joining any association, whether for benevolent or religious purposes, the usefulness of the end, as well as the propriety of the means, demand especial and serious consideration. Granted however that both the object of any given association is useful, and the means used for obtaining it judicious, still there are dangers and evil influences connected with associations in general, and those of the present day in particular, which deserve attention; though this attention may perhaps bring out a less pleasing view of the subject, than that which immediately occurs to the mind in considering them.

In the first place, there is always danger or cause for fear, lest in our busy cares for others, in lending ourselves to the benevolent schemes which occupy our countrymen and countrywomen, we should forget the paramount duty of self-regulation, and should so identify

ourselves with the societies to which we belong, as to estimate our own moral progress by their usefulness and success, taking it too easily for granted that our momentum and theirs is the same.

2ndly. It may be feared, that there are elements of evil afloat in many of these associations, even when formed for the best and noblest purposes. It is a most humiliating fact, yet it is one too well known, that the obstinacy, the jealousy, the disingenuousness, or self-sufficiency of a few individuals, will sometimes involve, and embroil a society devoted to the most benevolent ends; while a narrow-minded zeal, the offspring of party-spirit, a desire of notoriety and vain glory, do sometimes originate, and sometimes disturb, both our religious and charitable associations, making the meeting-room an arena for inflated and noisy, often for an indecorous and even irreverent display of religious sentiments; and not seldom, it is to be lamented, of personal resentments and prejudices, destined to be reported through the country by a weekly press, and thus throwing discredit on such associations, instead of making them really a means of imparting relief to the distressed, and knowledge to the ignorant, and of extending the blessings of Christianity, both in our own and to distant lands.

That religious associations should ever indeed lead to divisions rather than to peace among believers, shows how much that is faulty must be involved, either in the ends proposed, or the feelings brought to them, and how important it is, that the persons who enter into any association, should not only be *agreed* in their end, but

also in the means or measures to be taken for attaining it; otherwise, those who believe themselves to be combining for one purpose, may find that they are involved in others, of which their judgment and conscience utterly disapprove, and may incur the heavy responsibility of acts and opinions, from which they altogether dissent. The awful reproach of having stirred up by bitter words, bitter feelings against their neighbours, against their fellow-ministers, against those who bear rule over them in their respective churches,—this may indeed almost always be traced to a few individuals; yet as long as any one remains attached to the association or party from which they have issued, he is virtually responsible for all these evils, "and his disapprobation accordingly of any part of their conduct, to which he thus continues to give his countenance, so far from diminishing, rather enhances his culpability. Paul, we know, bitterly reproached himself, for having '*kept the garments* of them that stoned Stephen'; but what should we have thought of him, if he had done this, believing at the time that the deed was a foul murder*?"

To notice individually the religious associations of the present age, would be unsuitable to the design of these pages, but there is a class of private associations which I wish to make some remarks upon, I mean what are called Prayer Meetings and Bible Meetings. How often these meetings degenerate into coteries, for what may be called spiritual gossip, is too well known. But to take them under their best and most unexceptionable form, *i. e.* as conducted by good and pious, and in many

* Essays on Dangers to Christian Faith.

respects judicious persons,—they do seem wholly unsuitable to the wants of Christians, whether as members of families or of churches; in each of which relation with our fellow-Christians, the reading of God's word, and the assembling together for prayer, have their appropriate place, and their legitimate purposes. An association for mothers to pray for their children, seems still more unsuitable*. The scene of their duties must surely be their home. Christian mothers pray in private for these dear ones,—they pray with their husbands,—they pray with their families: nor does our church at least, forget young children in her public prayers; but there is, it seems, rather a tendency, even among religious and earnest people, to forget that portion of the church which is in their own house.

To return to public associations: great and invaluable blessings have been conferred on mankind through the societies so long established for publishing and disseminating the Bible in various languages, with or without our valuable Book of Prayer, and by those for sending out missions for the purpose of diffusing education and christian truth among the heathen,—for the propagation of the Gospel, as one of the most ancient of these designates the purpose of its own Society. That the exertions of these bodies have not been more generally successful in our own colonies, especially in India, may perhaps be traced to the fact, that British residents there have not always performed their part, as members of a christian church. How far indeed the

* This Society has lately ceased to exist.

corruption or negligence of individuals may turn aside and nullify the efforts, the patient, self-denying, and pious efforts, of the missionary, we have no more painful proof, than in the condition of the natives of our Indian settlements; where the irreligious, or careless lives of Englishmen, long after they ceased to be distinguished for rapacity and immorality, must have had the effect of impressing the more enlightened Hindoos, and through them the multitude, with a conviction, that the higher classes of the British nation did not believe what the ministers of their religion taught; and hence perhaps the very small progress since made in their conversion. The recent years indeed of this century have exhibited on this point, as on so many others, a cheering improvement, an improvement which may probably be traced to the influence of the excellent prelates who have too speedily succeeded one another in these vast dioceses; and whose residences seem to have produced the most beneficial effects on the moral and religious state of society in India. The exertions of many British residents in spreading education and knowledge, those forerunners of conversion, among the acute but ignorant natives, cannot be too much valued; and the time will soon come, it may be hoped, when such exertions will cease to be considered Quixotic by the mass of our countrymen and countrywomen in that part of the world*. The influence of the valuable system of education introduced into the army will doubtless work its

* See a most interesting volume of Murray's Library, "Letters from Madras."

way also, indirectly, among the native sepoys. Nor can the religious demeanour of their great commanders fail to make some impression on the armies of the East.

The duty of individual co-operation with missions, or societies, whose objects, though of acknowledged utility, happen to fall short of that which our private judgment and wishes demand, is not, it would seem, sufficiently perceived, or at least sufficiently acted on.

For example, vast educational movements have been made nearer home, by a government establishment, for the most efficient instruction of the people of Ireland; and a body of enlightened and excellent men watch over and conduct the machinery of the whole; yet because the mode in which the system is carried on is inadequate to the honest wishes, or in opposition to the prejudices of individuals, those individuals feel it no burthen to their conscience, to leave the schools in their neighbourhood wholly unsupported and neglected; schools at which the rising generation are under training for good or for evil. It may be expected,—indeed the feeling seems to be growing,—that the gentry of Ireland, of both sexes, will ere long more generally recognize it as a christian duty, to watch over the schools in their localities, and to encourage by kindly sympathy, the patient labours of the teachers; and thus to prevent the growth of evils which belong to every system framed by fallible beings, instead of reporting those evils as evidences of a particular failure.

PART II.

DOMESTIC LIFE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

MARRIAGE.

THE duties and defects of social life under the influence of modern civilization, and especially of a more general recognition of christian obligations, have been traced,—though very imperfectly,—through the preceding chapters. It remains to consider the result of these influences upon our domestic relations; and particularly to inquire how far, in these more intimate connections with each other,—in what may be called the *natural* ties of domestic life, as well as in those which we form for ourselves or others, through marriage,—we act out the great principles by which, as members of a community professing Christianity, we may be expected to be governed.

Marriage,—the step which separates two persons from the society in which they have moved, and gives them a new relation to each other,—being in this country the result of social intercourse, may be considered as a passage from social into domestic life; and it seems therefore to stand first in an inquiry concerning the domestic relations of the age we live in. It stands first in importance also; for this consecration of two individuals to each other, by which the nucleus of a new domestic life is formed within the great social circle, necessarily involves the most serious considerations and consequences, not only to the individuals, but to the world at large.

And yet at the very outset, in the formation of a connection which every one admits to be so sacred in itself, and so important in its influence on others,—an influence involving the fate of generations unborn,—there are principles at work, wholly inconsistent with such a view of its nature and character; and the connection is very commonly formed, not only without reference to the duties and the hopes of christian fellowship, but without the care usually bestowed on many other occasions, not nearly so much affecting the happiness and usefulness of life.

It is a humiliating consideration for the female sex, that many religiously disposed women are not as anxious about religious principles in their partner for life, as an equally serious-minded man would be. A man who is strongly influenced by christian motives will generally seek for the same animating principle in his wife. But, to use the language of an acute observer of human nature, "The apparent regard of many modern females for

religion in themselves, and indifference about it in their partners for life, make one sometimes inclined to think that they hold the opposite extreme to the Turk's opinion, and believe men to have no souls."

It would not perhaps be difficult to find a cause for this practical indifference, at least in some cases. A woman is often influenced by the feeling, "that she must marry when she can," as the common remark is. She thinks that if she rejects an eligible offer, she may lose her chance of settling well in life; and that unfortunate dread of a single life, which, where it exists, has so pernicious an effect on the mind of woman, leads some even of those who *do* possess religious principles, to sacrifice them to the fear of such a consequence. In other cases, a real *passion* is supposed to cancel all differences, whether of character or principle; and many who disapprove of such matches in theory, excuse them in practice by saying, "people in love cannot be expected to listen to reason," &c. If this *be* the case, being in love is indeed a very dangerous position; but it appears to me, that though a transient fancy of such a nature may take place, yet, that if a woman has once given the *highest* place in her heart to religion, she will feel it indispensable in those she loves. Will such a woman then be likely to attach herself to one who lives only for this world? or if an attachment should unhappily have been formed, will she cherish it, or consent to place herself under a yoke so dangerous to the fulfilment of her highest duties? I think not.

But this carelessness on so grave and important a subject is not to be attributed merely to youth, or love, or thoughtlessness; never is it more apparent than in

matches, as they are called, formed by parents for their children, or in many of those which men and women contract for themselves at a maturer age. The young indeed are less apt to be governed entirely by worldly motives,—at least young women; for I think that men of the same age are much oftener awake to mercenary feelings.

But how can we account for this general recklessness on so important a point as the choice of a "help-mate" for our journey through life? how connect it with the general improvement in moral feeling, and acknowledgement of religious obligations which belongs to this age? May we not fear that it arises from some insincerity in our religious sentiments,—from that want of *faith* in what we admit and believe, which suffers our highest interests to give way to worldly objects; which induces us to put *that* first which should be last, and that last which should be *first*; and leads us therefore to be more intensely anxious, when we form the marriage tie, either for ourselves or our children, to secure the things most valued by the world, than the advantages of christian fellowship or domestic happiness? As if Scripture had said, "Seek ye" *last* "the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

Two circumstances bring these views very prominently forward in the present day;—first, the more extensive intercourse between all ranks of society, which gives a wider scope for matrimonial schemes; and secondly, the fancied necessity imposed by our more extensive social relations, of conforming our style of life to that of the circle we move in, (mentioned among the evil influences of the world,) which inducing parents to live

beyond their means, disables them from making suitable provision for their daughters. Hence, to obtain such provision by marriage, and thus make amends for their own injustice, becomes a sacred duty in their eyes, and one to which all other considerations are made,—or supposed by necessity,—to yield. Nor must it be forgotten, that the match-making spirit of the age, so universally attributed to mothers, has not, unfrequently, its origin in the luxurious and selfish habits of fathers also,—in their love of the turf,—of play,—or other indulgences, often wholly incompatible with the duties which they owe to their children.

Still it must be admitted, that where none of these causes exist, parents have often not only an undue anxiety to establish their daughters properly—that is with a view chiefly to worldly considerations—but they take improper means to obtain the object of their wishes, and do not scruple to inspire their daughters with a similar anxiety. Young women are, in fact, very commonly brought up, not merely with a view to one object in life,—to the part intended to be assigned to them, viz. marriage,—but with a view to obtaining *for themselves* that object. One of the earliest lessons they are taught is the duty, not of giving pleasure, but of pleasing;—two motives very different in themselves and in their effects: the love of pleasing, (or in the language of phrenologists,) the love of approbation, being usually sufficiently active, and requiring control rather than excitement. Yet we see this propensity not only sedulously cultivated by parents, but cultivated for an ulterior motive, that viz. of attraction. Yet education founded on

the desire of pleasing, and above all, of pleasing the other sex, is the most dangerous that can be given to woman. It is not in itself a moral principle, and is not therefore recognized by Christianity as a motive; nor do we find that it enables a young person to fulfill more properly the duties of a wife or mother. On the contrary, it endangers the faithful fulfilment of these duties, while it unfits her for the lot which usually awaits some of the female members of almost every family, viz. a single life; because she who has acted on such a motive, and with such views, is placed, if they fail, in the mortifying position of one, who has exerted her powers not only for a selfish purpose, but for a purpose which she has not accomplished. Such a stimulus too, once given to a propensity seldom unsufficiently developed, requires all the after self-discipline of a more than ordinary mind, or of one, at least, strongly influenced by christian sentiments, to keep it under due control.

Every right-feeling parent indeed, however dear to her may be the society of her daughters, should, and will be, ready and glad, to resign them, when such an union offers as shall promise them a tolerable share of happiness in this present world, provided it does not involve danger to their happiness hereafter. But these two requisites will preserve her, except under peculiar circumstances, from all undue anxiety on the subject; and will make her feel that the single state,—even if it be one of dependence,—is to be preferred for her daughters, to marriage with a man who is more likely to prove a hindrance than a help-meet for them. She knows that

marriage—an institution belonging solely to this imperfect state,—is not essential to our moral training for a better world;—that though the ordinary female character, perhaps, unfolds itself more favourably through the medium of a well-defined class of duties, and in the sphere of the conjugal and maternal affections, they are not essential to the development of the *highest* qualities in woman; and that though they offer useful and obvious, they do not supply the only, or even the best, motives for exertion. Woman, under the influence of christian faith, will avail herself of *whatever* moral discipline the circumstances of her life afford. It is to those who are *not* so influenced,—to whom their faith is a dormant, and not an active principle, that the stimulus of more defined and obligatory domestic duties, and the self-denial necessarily involved in some of them, forms a moral training,—the best they are capable of undergoing.

Still it may generally be admitted, that marriage between persons whose great aims and recognitions are the same, involves the largest portion of happiness and usefulness which this world has to bestow. But this fact, however fully acknowledged, will never, under right views of life and its awful duties, lead our daughters to enter into, or mothers to seek for them, establishments which can afford only doubtful prospects of good or happiness to either party. Above all, mothers will shrink from inducing their daughters to marry, where they are unable to give both respect and affection.

Not that it is at all necessary to the happiness of the married state, that an union should be founded on a

romantic passion, (though woe to the woman who marries one whom she feels she cannot *like* as well as respect,)—it is enough if there be suitable qualities and suitable tastes on both sides—if neither has a shade of preference for another, but has each a heart free and ready to love and honour the other, through their married life. The *warmest* affection—often the *truest*—results from such an union.

But in deprecating the anxiety shown by parents to transfer their daughters to another home, we should as little desire to see them indifferent to their tastes and wishes, or selfishly bent on securing a life-long interest in their society. There is a natural desire for a home of one's own, which we ought fully to sympathise with, in our young daughters. We must not forget our own early feelings, so far as to suppose that their father's roof, however dear, can quite fulfill their youthful aspirations. If it has been to them what their parents ought to make it, they will not indeed be eager to leave its safe and holy shelter; and when left, they will ever turn to it with tender and loving recollections: but they must not be thought to slight its advantages, if their youthful fancy pictures one still fairer, still dearer in this world;—if they think that to be the centre of a loving circle, is better than to be one of its members;—if the endearing thoughts of perfect friendship and maternal joys win their young desires. And those who have failed to realize such a scene, (too often indeed in possession un-realized) will perhaps for a few years feel that they have missed a fairer portion of their loving Father's gifts on earth, than any which they

have enjoyed. Yet they will never regret that they have not been induced to barter the happiness,—or if not the happiness, the safety,—of home and personal freedom, for even the most splendid establishment.

In the present condition of society, the Marriage state is indeed a natural, but not a necessary one for woman; not necessary for her happiness, or for the development of her highest faculties. Civilization has slowly worked out the great change which Christianity made in her destiny. Whether or not the female mind is capable of the highest powers of abstraction, or flights of genius, woman is placed morally and intellectually on a fair equality with man. She was made the friend and companion of Him who honoured and sanctified this earth, by holding social intercourse with its inhabitants; in this intercourse, no distinction appears to have been made between the sexes, but such as was connected with their physical condition. They were not to be sent forth as Teachers, or Preachers of the Gospel, or to hold forth in churches and assemblies: all this was unsuitable to the modesty and retiringness of their character, and to the position which it was God's will they should hold in this world. But all other fetters were to be unloosed. The marriage tie, which the will of her earthly masters could once so easily dissolve, and which, under the earlier dispensation, had—as our Lord expressly reminds the Jews,—"*on account of the hardness of their hearts,*" been relaxed by their ancient lawgiver, was henceforth to be severed by no caprice or passion, by no dissimilarity of tastes, or even commission of crime on either side, save for one only, on the side of the woman,

—infidelity to her marriage vows; this awful crime alone dissolves a bond formed under the sanction of heaven. But woman was still to be subject to her husband (Ephes. 5, 22); the well-being of society demands it, and they who stand highest in the scale of intellectual and moral endowments, will be the most able to understand, and the readiest to acknowledge, the practical necessity of such a law; while those who consider their conformity to it as an act of obedience to God's will, are enabled, under this reference, to yield it, should this be their lot, to one far inferior to themselves in mental and moral development. The law of submission, however, relates to this world only; as heirs of immortality, "there are neither bond nor free, male nor female; all are *one* in Christ Jesus." Those then who hope to have their portion in the world to come, are *in that hope equal.* And men who consider their female friends as the companions of their future exalted state,—"their fellow-heirs,"—will feel towards them very differently from such as look upon them in the light of associates only for this life; and in their choice of a companion, they will generally prove how far this fact is really felt, as well as acknowledged by them.

We have said that civilization has practically worked out the great change which Christianity effected. For though women of all nations appear to have taken their natural and proper place among *Christians,* from the very earliest ages of Christianity, yet when the church degenerated and barbarism swept over the face of society, their situation and character retrograded; and though they were occasionally honoured as saints, or adored as

the inspiring objects of chivalric devotion, they were generally sunk into a state of moral and intellectual inferiority. In more advanced ages their influence increased; but is was chiefly felt in courtly or political circles. Sometimes indeed they became patronizers of wits and learned men; and at all times they have formed the attraction of the ball-room and the race-course, while they have ever been valued as housekeepers, and most earnestly sought as nurses in declining age, or premature decay. But their present just position has been only slowly, and with occasionally retrograde steps, established, under the influence of modern civilization: and it may be considered, as in part the result of a more general diffusion of the light and influence of Christianity. This moral, and generally intellectual equality of the sexes being admitted then, how do they act out the duties of each phase of life? And first in union with each other, and under the supposition of a marriage formed under tolerably favourable auspices.

Marriage makes so great a change in the exterior circumstances of both sexes,—there is so much more of reality and apparent earnestness of purpose in the ordinary life of married than of unmarried people,—but most especially of men,—that one is inclined to think some very great and important change has passed over their characters, in consequence of the assumption of the marriage bond. And to a certain extent this is the fact; the irregular, thoughtless, and often worse than thoughtless habits of a young man, usually give place to steadiness of purpose, decency of life, a more regular attention to religious ordinances, and a more general

sense of moral responsibility; or at least more deference for public opinion, in place of the opinion of his own particular set, by whom, as leader or led, he has hitherto probably been chiefly influenced. But at this point, the character of the married man often remains stationary: for the ordinary circumstances of his married life, being such as to cherish, rather than to correct the selfish tendencies of his nature, the faults of youth become, under a slight modification, fixed into the habits of middle life. This at least seems the usual order of things, when men are not under the direct influence of christian faith and motives. In woman, on the contrary, not only a change of habits, but a partial change and improvement of character, much oftener takes place. That devotion to others, which married life induces in a tolerably well-disposed woman, has a tendency to keep in check the selfishness of her nature, and to lay a wholesome restraint on her temper; while the personal sickness and danger to which she is so often exposed, are likely at least to remind her of her dependence on God. It is true that there is always a danger of the benevolent affections being contracted within the home circle; and of its beloved objects becoming so much a part of herself, as to be viewed by her subjectively only; still, this is one remove from personal selfishness.

But it would seem that a happy marriage ought to be much more fruitful of good, not only in the external habits of life, but in that education of the heart and mind, which is always going on within us, for evil or for good, through the whole course of our lives. Men who think at all seriously on the subject, are ready to

acknowledge, that marriage has claims upon them, beyond the mere renunciation of irregular habits and a greater attention to the duties of their profession: but if a man adds to these requisitions, a more seriously ordered life,—if he lives on terms of affection and kindness with his wife, and is an affectionate and careful father, he usually considers that he has performed his share of the compact; while if, on the other hand, his wife is ready to conform her habits, tastes and desires to those of her husbsnd, and there is a mutual sense of the duties of religion, the result will be what may be called, relatively, a happy marriage. But though there will be much to approve in such a married life, it is neither the happiest conceivable, nor does it work out all the moral improvement of which the parties are capable; on the contrary, under an unequal distribution of domestic discipline, the faults of the one party are cherished, while those of the other are rather suppressed than subdued. Hence it is, that wives who have been eminently self-denying and submissive to their husbands, very often become as widows *exigéantes*, and gently tyrannical towards their children. No principle of action having been formed in them, the habit of suppression yields as soon as the long-accustomed pressure is taken off, and the original faults of temper, or the selfish propensities, quietly resume their sway.

The holy compact into which two rational beings,—responsible, not only to each other, but to God,—have entered, should be founded on perfect confidence; and it should involve a mutual conformity of tastes and habits, rather than a one-sided submission of them.

And if, in this conformity, the wife takes, as seems befitting, the greater share, since not only divine precept, but the natural position and endowments of woman, seem better to fit her for conformity,—there should be on the man's side also, a resignation of such things as (though in themselves indifferent) do yet happen to war with the feelings or temperament of the woman he has chosen; and there should be a watchful care not to wound her by irregularities of temper, or petty selfishness. If the wheel on one side does all the business, there will be a creak and lunge from time to time in the whole vehicle of domestic life. Such an union may be respectable, and may contain a certain portion of happiness:—there may be peace and concord in it too,—but not harmony.

How many things are there, which married people endure *from each* other through life, because there is a want of that true confidence in each other's love and friendship, which enables them to mention to each other the errors,—the less than errors—the points distasteful in each;—trifles which, in the associate of a few days or weeks, would not be worth mentioning, but which in a companion for life, may form at its close a very vexatious, because unnecessary aggregate of disturbances! The very thought, in fact, of a slight evil to be endured through life, makes a sensitive person nervous, and doubtless exaggerates its real importance. Even small habits of self-indulgence,—including those, scarcely amounting to more, than what in childhood would be called tricks,—have been seen to prevent the machinery of domestic life from running so smoothly as

it should do ; and even sometimes, by calling forth irritating words, to form the nucleus of a temporary estrangement of tenderness.

A woman of great refinement and sensibility, may be annoyed by trifles in her husband,—either in temper or habits, which, because they *are* trifles, she is afraid to mention to him, or which she ventures to allude to by hints only. Now it is true, that to some minds, a hint on such a point is sufficient ; but in fact, the less tangible the subject of annoyance, the less probable it is, that a hint will be even understood. How much happier would it have been for both parties, if they had come to a mutual determination, when first they entered on the duties of life, to be perfectly open with each other, so that each might have been made aware of, and therefore enabled to avoid, the habits or faults which were unpleasant to the other,—things perhaps in themselves indifferent, and for the most part relative,—*faults*, only because they are felt to be *annoyances*,—and which are likely therefore to remain unheeded by the possessor, be it husband or wife, but which are capable of being the cause of constant slight irritation in a connection so near, that not even a grain of sand can introduce itself without grating on the one side or the other !

But there are other, and greater advantages in mutual, and entire confidence and truthfulness : for though that kind of reciprocal devotion and attachment which belongs to certain temperaments, and which blinds a married couple to the faults of each other, may indeed be a state of conjugal felicity, and serene content, it is also one of extreme danger,—as all friendship and affection between

erring mortals must be, where its foundation has been laid in, and is maintained by, mutual or partial blindness. From conjugal blindness however there is more danger, from the very circumstance that there is less certainty of disappointment—less certainty that the eyes will ultimately be opened—than in the blindness of friendship. Yet even from a state of conjugal blindness, there is often a fearful awakening, about the time when the faults of parents are first brought into contact with their children, and the rival interests of parental and conjugal love disturb each other in the mind of the mother. Under such circumstances, she is seldom able to discharge her duty to either.

Yet the charm of woman's entire devotedness is so great in imagination, as well as in reality, and its evil influence so ill-appreciated, that most men, and even some women, are fond of praising Milton's Eve, as a picture of feminine perfection, and quote with approbation, the famous lines which speak of Adam's looking "to God only, she to God in him." They forget, as it has been remarked to me, that the moral of the poem,—though it is not the one Milton intended to convey,—does in fact, point out the *danger* of such conduct. This woman, so worshiping her husband, was the means of persuading him to eat the forbidden fruit.

The danger to woman's own highest duties indeed, of a conjugal devotedness so great as that we have been speaking of, seems to have been alluded to by the Apostle, where he says, "The married woman careth for the things of the world, *how she may please her husband.*" Now as we know what St. Paul's notions of conjugal

duty were, we may understand in what sense he must have used these words.

But where two beings enter upon the scene of their married life, conscious of a higher responsibility than any which they lie under to each other, there is no need of mutual blindness to sustain a perfect love and confidence between them. In their happy home, a daily sacrifice has been instituted of all that can hurt or offend each other,—of all that can desecrate the name of their Maker, or do despite to the gentle whispers of his Spirit;—their household has become a consecrated place.

Yet this domestic sanctuary which we have described, is liable to be disturbed by our relations with the world. It must be so; isolation of families does not seem to belong to the plan of Providence, and social influences must often perplex our domestic responsibilities; still, if mutual love and confidence are preserved in all their integrity, they will not only prevent any invasion of the domestic peace from external causes, but they will carry the married pair through all their difficulties, and enable them to amend the mistakes and errors in which their worldly intercourse may at some time or other involve them. And thus in becoming true help-meets to each other, may they be accomplishing the designs of Providence in sanctioning such a connection. The husband, toil-worn by the business of his daily calling,—be that calling what it may,—or troubled and anxious perhaps, through his social connections, will find in his cheerful, well-ordered home, a resting-place for his mind, where he can pause amidst the stirring scenes of life, along

with one, in whose ready sympathy, and on whose faithful counsel he can depend. From her too he will hear, *the truth*; for he well knows that while she loves his fame, she seeks something more real and dear for the friend of her soul—her *fellow-heir*—than the approbation of his fellow-creatures!

CHAPTER II.

SINGLE LIFE.

THAT period of life when youth declines, or rather ripens, into maturity, is one full of interest in the existence of man; and, whether in the married or single state, bears little analogy to the same season in the life of woman. It is usually in manhood a period of cheerfulness, and activity; it witnesses the fulfilment of many long-indulged hopes, and the cessation of many annoyances. The anxieties and uncertainties attending a man's youthful exertions, have been in a great measure overcome, and those exertions, partially at least, crowned with success. The future, with all its fair promises, lies open to him under the advantages of extended experience, and the consciousness of matured powers; powers, supported, we may suppose, by that weight of character, which an upright, and tolerably successful man, does by this period of his life bear about with him in society. If he be a single man, he misses indeed some of the happiness, and many of the holy influences of married life, and he is more exposed perhaps to the domination of the animal nature,—of unconscious self-indulgence: but suppose in him, kindly sympathies, and an active benevolence, and above all, suppose him under the softening and controlling in-

fluence of religious faith, and we must acknowledge that his position, at the season of his maturity, rests upon a cheerful and commanding eminence in life. In society it is independent and agreeable: the fact of his being single implies no personal disregard of him, and involves therefore no mortification; on the contrary, it gives the impression to his companions, of a certain fastidiousness in his tastes, which does him no discredit in their eyes. At all events, if his single state can be referred to any fault of his own, or any want of appreciation of him by the fair companions of his earlier life, it is one which he is supposed capable of repairing; nor is he less acceptable in society, because he is felt to be a suitable alliance for some of its unmarried members. So far indeed the comparison of the single man's life with that of woman in the same position, seems disadvantageous to the latter.

For the unmarried woman, this stage of her existence presents trials distinct and peculiar to it;—trials not perhaps greater than those of her married friends, but such as are generally felt (partly because the others are less known) to be more depressing. Some mortifications too, made heavier by a faulty education, offer themselves to her self-love and vanity, and some, doubtless, to her natural and more amiable sensibilities. Let us not withhold from these our wholesome sympathy; but let us strip them of all that is wrong, and false, and sickly. Let us see too whether the civilization of this nineteenth century has not materially improved the relations of women with society at large, not merely as objects of admiration, or as wives,—but as women. And above all,

let us look upon the large resources which Christianity has bequeathed them.

The season of their maturity, while it has robbed them of none of their youthful vigour, nor the best part of their youthful enthusiasm, has made certain other changes in their condition. The personal charms of youth, the interest which it inspires in others, are waning; the fairy visions which youth had formed for its life-long enjoyment, are giving place to the steady realities of existence; and some of the sorrows which the chastening hand of Providence scatters over, even the most prosperous life, have already, it is probable, drawn upon their domestic happiness, or on the pleasures of friendship. Nor are these trials peculiar to the state of a single woman, though it is certain that they are very much softened and modified by the relations of a happy marriage. But while admitting the shadows which gather round this season of a single woman's life, I hope to show, that they are but passing clouds, and that they do not necessarily rest upon her future destiny. In order to estimate fairly and properly the condition of an unmarried woman in the present age, we should consider it apart from the morbid influences of education, and from those of dependence, and also under domestic circumstances not unfavourable to her happiness. We should consider it, also, apart from the shade cast upon it by the foolish notion sometimes entertained, that every young woman, who having lived in society, has arrived at maturity without having entered the marriage state, must needs be in the condition of a person slighted by the other sex. Now though nothing can, as a general

rule, be more untrue, and though the number of charming women who remain unmarried in proportion to those who become wives, would reflect little honour on man, if this supposition were founded on fact, yet nothing is more readily taken for granted by an inferior class of minds.

The truth is, that besides the number of women whose position admits of little intercourse with the other sex, and besides the obstacles which so often prevent those who like each other, from being united, (among which may be placed a tendency in men themselves, to sacrifice their inclinations to their interest,) there are very many women, who not having met with persons suited to their tastes and notions of happiness, have remained unmatched, simply because their own greater delicacy, or as the world calls it, fastidiousness of taste, has led them to prefer the single state to a *mariage de convenance*. There are many women too, who are supposed to have been unsought, because it has been their honourable practice to withdraw themselves from attentions which they felt would not be ultimately acceptable to them, and could therefore only lead to a result, which, however gratifying to the vanity of the one sex, always places the other in a painful and mortifying position.

It must be acknowledged that the idea I have been combating respecting single women, has been cherished partly through the indecorous eagerness with which parents often seek to establish their daughters, and partly from the manner in which many young women lend themselves to maternal anxiety and maternal manœuvres.

But then again, this undue anxiety on their part to form a marriage of doubtful advantages, is very frequently induced, not exactly by the circumstances of an unhappy,—but by those of a thoroughly uncomfortable home,—of a home unsuited to the wants and natural wishes of our unmarried daughters. This should be carefully looked to. If the comfort and reasonable pleasures of the elder branches of the family are sacrificed to the younger, especially to those of a second marriage, or, as is very commonly the case, the interests of the sisters, to those of the brothers,—if our daughters do not enjoy the full freedom of womanhood, but find themselves hampered by a thousand useless and petty restrictions,—if, in short, they are not, at a suitable age, made the free citizens of their father's house, subject only to such regulations as must necessarily exist among the members of every well-ordered family,—the desire of liberty, so strong in the human heart, (and not least so in the highest order of minds,) will make a home of their own a subject of undue importance and anxiety in their eyes, and induce them to accept an offer, accompanied with the most serious disadvantages, which shall remove them from restraints such as increasing years will only (they feel) render more irksome to them. As an instance of what I mean by irksome restrictions, I have known some parents who make it a point to read all the letters of their grown-up daughters,—those even who have been some years in the world, and who being of age, have legal power (they forget) to take the most important step in life: others, who will not suffer them to stay from home: others,

who will not allow them even to form any female acquaintance out of their own set. Yet all these are persons who would not scruple to allow their daughters to dance with a person wholly unknown to them, or if known, often of a character *they could not wholly approve.*

But the most important of all the causes which have, until within a very recent period, contributed to render the state of a single woman less honoured and happy and respectable than it ought to have been, lay, in the inferiority of female education. Of female education in its true signification, our ancestors knew nothing. Learning and accomplishments, when circumstances permitted, were occasionally bestowed on those, whose strong bent for such acquisitions was not easily repressed. But even during the earlier part of the present century, Education, — very imperfect in itself, — was little diffused, and a woman of extraordinary acquirements, however sought in literary circles, was by no means an agreeable companion in domestic life, or even in general society, and was too often distinguished from the other sex chiefly by her pedantry and self-conceit. Such an education as this did not tend to place woman at all in her right position; for it commonly happened that, in the acquisition of unusual, and at that time unfeminine attainments, she lost the graces of the one sex, without acquiring the characteristics of the other.

But a well-educated woman of the present age is still a woman; and the graces of her sex are in nowise injured by the cultivation of her mind, and the consequent expansion of all her powers. She does not derive

her dignity or importance solely from her connection with the other sex; for she belongs to the genus *homo*, and is no longer a mere apanage of *vir*. She fills up an honoured and useful position in society, and if not the help-meet, she can still be the distinguished and valued friend of man. As such, she was recognized by ONE who was far above all other men; and as such she is most valued by the best and wisest among mankind at the present day.

Such being the true position of woman in the present age, it may fairly be asserted, that though her passage from youth into the season of maturity presents certain definite trials, (and it should be remembered that youth itself is by no means devoid of these,) they are not such as ought to affect her permanent happiness or usefulness;—that this passage conducts her to a period of existence most important to the true development of her being, in connection with its high destination; and that *in* this connection, it possesses abundant resources against that morbid sensibility which is too apt to invade the mind when losing the freshness and elasticity of youth.

If indeed during the season of youth, we have been happy enough to have received the precious truths of Christianity into our hearts, and to have walked with God in our young and bright years, this passage out of it,—supposing even that the circumstances of our life happen to make it one of peculiar trial,—does not come upon us unfurnished with cheering influences. Some lights, dear to our youthful fancies, have perhaps been quenched; but those which were purest and brightest

have not been of earth, and therefore no coming shadows of earth can dim them.

If again our earlier years have been given to the world, and we have remembered,—through the *outward* ordinances of our faith only,—Him whom we had been taught in our infancy to love, (for the temptation of a worldly life in youth is to forget God,) then, this discipline of circumstances, may, haply, lead us back to Him in our maturity. Then it is, that we look *about us* for duties to perform, and find among them the truest sources of happiness;—then it is we perceive, that woman has her mission, whether single or married, and that its objects are quite as numerous, if not so obvious, as those of her married friends. The large resources of charity lie open to her, *the charities of life*—not confined to, though ever busy about, the poor, but extending to sisters, brothers, and their offspring,—to parents if we retain them, to friends, to country, to other countries, to the exile, to the sorrowing,—of whatever grade, or tongue, or land. Here is no stagnation of life: the intercourse with society,—with the good, and the wise, the learned and accomplished,—which is involved in these charities of life, forms also a portion of its pleasures, and one not the less enjoyable, because it is an *incidental*, and not a *direct* object of pursuit. So too she will find, as she advances, that *progress*, that vivifying principle, which animated her early youth, and whose source is from above,—*is* still going on, through each season of a Christian's life, and even amidst decay, till our mortal course is for ever ended.

The condition of single women, whose circumstances place them in a state of dependence on the bounty of others, or on their own exertions, remains to be considered. We have classed these two conditions together, though they are as different as is the effect commonly produced by the circumstances of each, on their respective characters. Dependence on the bounty of others has a natural tendency to lower and contract, or at least to depress the mind; dependence on our own exertions, to raise and invigorate it. Yet we would not cherish a proud or unyielding spirit in woman; and where her dependence rests on some near and dear connection, by whom she is not felt as a burden, she has no reason to shrink from a state which must ever be one of self-discipline, and in which she may, by the exercise of the most amiable and useful qualities, make ample returns for the protection and support afforded her. If love can repay love, it can surely repay pecuniary obligations; whilst it will ever suggest means of usefulness, which must make the bond of gratitude a mutual one.

But unhappily there are cases, in which a woman, nursed even in the lap of luxury, and cherished by loving friends, finds it necessary to make use of her own exertions to obtain a livelihood. She is urged by pecuniary difficulties, or by the circumstances of an unhappy home; or she may chuse to relieve the privations of a scanty domestic provision, for those most dear to her, by making use of the resources of her own understanding and accomplishments, to effect this laudable and honourable purpose; or finally she may have been edu-

cated for the profession of teaching, or born in a situation which makes it a natural position to her, and one therefore which tends to elevate instead of depressing her condition. Other resources there are, where a deficient education or ill health preclude tuition: but they are sadly scanty in their results, though far from degrading; since no honest employment, whose object is to secure independence for ourselves or others, can be degrading to a gentlewoman.

If a woman has talents for literary pursuits, she may find in these a useful and honourable occupation and provision: but such talents being comparatively rare, the ordinary resource for women must be tuition, under some form or other, provided their education has fitted them for the task.

The office of daily teacher implies more personal freedom, and fewer trials of temper than that of domestic governess. It also secures the enjoyment of a home, which in cases where there are young sisters to educate, or an aged parent to attend to, is an important consideration. But then it does not involve duties so interesting as those of a resident governess, nor is it so likely to awaken the sympathies of pupils*, or to secure kind and affectionate friends: nor again does it afford means so available, of making any provision for age or sickness.

* I have indeed seen the kindest feelings exist between the non-resident teacher and pupils. And where the pupils really value as they ought, the benefits they receive, (which money—if members of this profession were far better remunerated than they are—can ill repay,) there will be no lack of sympathy. Still less will there be that neglect of the feelings, and disregard of the convenience of their teachers, which is too often manifested.

It is to be lamented indeed, that the salaries of domestic governesses are so often inadequate; but this evil is frequently increased on their part, by the habit of spending their salaries, or great part of them, on their dress, instead of making a reserve for future exigences. Under no circumstances is the female passion for dress less excusable, than when indulged by one who has no position to support, and in whom therefore a simple and neat attire is as much more becoming, as it is more consistent with elegance and good taste.

The position of a resident governess is so commonly held by young women of the present day, not only by those directly trained for it, but by those who are unexpectedly invited to it by misfortune,—and it involves such sacred duties, both in relation to the employer and the employed, that it may be an interesting subject of inquiry, how far the present state of society,—in which our relative duties seem better understood than formerly,—bears upon the condition of these its interesting, but often unhappy members. In general, they are more adequately remunerated, and far better treated, than they were a few years back; partly because their attainments are much more respectable, and partly because there is a more general sense of the claims of mankind upon each other, and especially of the claims of those, whose happiness, we have, by receiving them into our families, bound ourselves, as far as we are able, to cherish and protect.

It is one of the advantages of a high state of civilization, and one therefore which will be felt in proportion to our advancement, that men, however they may

value the gifts of fortune, have a more abiding reverence for those of intellect*; and that those persons therefore, whose business it is to train the human mind in its childhood and infancy, are, in proportion to their capability of doing this, felt to have a mission next only to that which propagates Divine Truth. And I believe that in proportion to our own cultivation of mind, and consequent appreciation of the value of education in others, will be our respect towards the instructors of the rising generation. The sentiments of the present age on this subject are greatly in advance of those which were generally entertained, especially with respect to female teachers, some twenty or thirty years ago; and I am borne out by my own remembrances in saying, that the teacher of a national school is far more generally respected now, than was the most accomplished private governess in former days.

It is true that there have always been found certain families, whose more intelligent view of their relative duties, and higher tone of moral and religious obligations, have placed them apart from, or beyond, their age in this and every other point: but with these exceptions, a governess was formerly too often treated, if not with unkindness, at least with utter neglect and want of sympathy.

As a proof how little importance was formerly attached to the duties of a governess,—how little her very

* One is struck with this regard for learning and talent, in an age so corrupt as that of the early Roman Emperors, during which the poor enslaved Greeks—externally the most degraded of the Roman provincials,—were held in the highest reverence on account of their superior gifts and acquirements.

existence even was recognized,—I remember having been on one occasion, not more I think than twelve or fourteen years ago, been very much struck by the intelligence and good taste of a lady near whom I chanced to be seated at a house where I was visiting: on the next occasion of my meeting the father of the family, (himself a most accomplished and sensible person,) and inquiring the name of the lady I had conversed with a few evenings before at his house, he went through a number of persons, whom my description however did not suit, and at last said, "Why really I think it must be Miss C., M.'s governess; she has lived some time with us: I am glad you think well of her." "Do not *you*?" was the question in return. "The truth is, I never thought of conversing with her. I took it for granted she was what she ought to be, from the fact that Mrs. B. engaged her. But I am determined to have some conversation with her." Now the gentleman in question did not want general kindliness, and good-nature, and would probably have taken some trouble to serve the young person in question, had his benevolence been awakened to do so. But wonderful to say, the instructress and companion of his young daughters had not attracted sufficient attention, nor had the claims of persons engaged in a course of duties so important to society, evidently presented themselves to his mind.

The situation of tutors in Scotch families twenty or thirty years ago, and not many years earlier, in those of England, was still more objectionable, owing to a far greater degree of ignorance and want of refinement in the highest classes of the community, than we of these

days can well conceive. For under the general diffusion of knowledge and awakening of intelligence which have since taken place, these things have become matters of history, rather than of experience. Tuition is now considered, in England at least, one of the most honourable professions in which a man can engage; for it has been consecrated by, and will henceforth be connected in our minds with all that we know of most wise, and excellent, and refined in human nature.

The time is approaching too, we may hope, when woman will be not less honoured in her generation. With respect to female schools, however, I cannot wish to see them win public favour in their present form. I cannot wish to see women at the head of *large* establishments of this kind, for I think them wholly unsuited to the sort of education which is most to be desired for girls: and I believe that they involve such serious and uncontrollable evils, that I cannot wish, and I certainly do not expect, that they will ever be generally adopted by parents;—(by those I mean, who are obliged, or who think it most expedient to educate their children from home) since the very reasons which often induce us to prefer *great* schools for our sons, would naturally lead us to deprecate them for our daughters.

But there are not entirely wanting (it is to be wished there were more of them) small establishments, conducted on liberal, enlightened, and christian principles; where the head of the little community is beloved and revered, and where her assistants and pupils form one well-ordered family. Such persons are honoured wherever they are known.

I return however to the situation of domestic governesses, both because it employs by far the greater number of those whose vocation is teaching, and because I think, that as their position is so much altered and improved, at this present period, it would be unfair and unprofitable to dwell exclusively on the duties to be exercised *towards* them, without alluding to those which may be expected *from* them in return. And since it is now generally acknowledged that there are definite duties on each side, it may be better to enter a little further into the subject, and endeavour to adjust the claims of each party, under the present circumstances of social and domestic life.

In the first place, it is very important, that persons who intend to undertake a situation,—involving duties and difficulties far more perplexing than those of mere tuition,—should clearly understand what their own position will be; and that they should not exaggerate either its probable evils, or its possible advantages; and that they should enter upon it in a proper frame of mind; not in the spirit of self-sufficiency, but of one whose sufficiency is of God. Such a spirit is trustful and cheerful, and especially, it is *humble*. Man has little to do with pride, and woman less; but least of all, one who undertakes a situation like that of governess, in which, pride is the certain,—usually the chief, source of unhappiness.

We hear a good deal of proper pride, and honest pride; I believe that terms so indefinite, when linked together, are very apt to mislead, and that it would be as well to use some other word. If we admit that *any* pride is proper, it will be difficult to limit its degree; while *that* pride which is supposed to spring out of *honesty*, is very

liable to taint its source. The Apostle knew better what was suitable for man when he said, "Be ye clothed with humility."

A friend of mine, who had seen and observed much of life in general, told me, that she had met with *one* happy governess,—remarkable, among many superior qualities, for her *humility*. Such a person knows none of the trials of *wounded* pride, and *mortified* pride, and *offended* pride, for she has no pride to wound, or mortify, or offend.

Pride, which is only one of the many forms of selfishness, has no tendency even to secure its own cravings; on the contrary, she who is engrossed with the thought of her own claims, her own rights, and her own wrongs, will be constantly exposed to suffering, from some real or supposed invasion of those rights and claims by others.

Many persons too, and not least, governesses themselves, confound together the *peculiar* evils sometimes inflicted by the injustice and selfishness of their employers, with the *general* evils which are inseparable from their condition as governesses, and which no kindness or consideration of their employers can entirely spare them. Now it may be well to consider, in what these general evils consist, for it is of no use to overlook or to attempt to explain away such as are real, though unavoidable.

A governess enters upon her situation in a family, under circumstances different from any other. It is a connection too close for mere acquaintanceship, and too recent for any thing like friendship; while she, we will suppose, full of good intentions, and with a knowledge

of her own valuable qualities, which her employers cannot possess, expects to find a ready-established confidence and regard on their part, which can only be the result of long knowledge, and experience. This loneliness of position,—the being *in* a family, and yet not of it,—is indeed one of the inevitable evils of her position,—but the sense of it will gradually lessen, in proportion as she lives to others, and for others, and draws her thoughts as much as possible from herself, to her duties ; still more, if she is so happy as to think of herself chiefly, in connection with her highest mission, and her unfailing hopes.

Again, with respect to her pupils, she often has to counteract the bad effects of early spoiling in the nursery, or drawing-room, or in both,—and not unfrequently to contend with prejudices against herself, which have been instilled into the minds of the children by their nurses. If she is really disposed to do her duty, she may often be thwarted by the parents ; and the more conscientious these are,—the more devoted as parents,—the more they are liable to interfere with her, unless there is a perfect agreement between their ideas on the subject of education. Very often indeed she has simply to follow out the plan laid down by the parents ; and this, unless it should happen to disagree very much with her own notions, (in which case she would do well to withdraw herself,) involves less anxiety, though it affords also less personal interest.

Then again she has many of the duties of a mother to perform, without the natural, and almost instinctive affection, which lightens a mother's task. She often enters upon these duties at the least attractive age, when

the charm of early childhood has disappeared, and the season of troublesome faults, and tricks, is fully arrived. These trials too, she has to meet at once; whereas they dawn gradually upon a mother,—with whom, caresses, sports, and watchful tenderness, have formed the chief part of her early intercourse with her children; while the part of reproving, restraining, punishing, and setting lessons, belongs to the governess at the very outset; though if she be wise, she will beware of exerting her authority until she has got a little acquainted with the dispositions of her pupils.

If she has elder pupils who are approaching womanhood, she will be tempted to turn from the less agreeable duties furnished her by the younger, in order to form friendships with some of them; and this intimacy often becomes a source of real comfort to her, and of pleasure and benefit to them. Many there are, who can reckon a former governess among their best and truest friends, —a friend who unites the freedom of youthful intercourse, with something of a maternal interest in their welfare. But if the instructress reckons on this source of pleasure as a matter of course, or feels herself wronged or slighted when it does not take place, or if she turn from her legitimate occupations with the younger ones of the family, to seek it, she will often meet with disappointment, while she will lose her highest gratification, the consciousness of duties well-performed.

There is, together with sensitive pride, very commonly a want of self-respect in those who undertake the office of governess, which leads also to much suffering. I have known many, who without avowing it, are evidently

ashamed of their employment; they wish to forget, and to make others forget it; they are hurt if any allusion is made to their young charges, or to the school-room; and they construe an unguarded word or look into an unpleasant allusion to their peculiar situation. When visitors are in the house, they are in a prickly state of uneasy and sensitive suspicion, lest they should not receive the attentions which they consider due to them; and not unfrequently, a piece of mere forgetfulness on the part of the kindest and most attentive guests is resented as deliberate and intentional neglect. And finally they are apt to be jealous of the friendships which their pupils form with others. These are I believe among the general evils connected with the situation of governess in a private family; many of which however will be practically escaped, if its duties are entered on in a right spirit.

Of the *peculiar evils* of a governess's life,—those viz. which are inflicted by the injustice and selfishness of their employers,—less can be said, because they are more individual in their nature. But it should be remembered by the young governess who is most exposed to their influence, that selfishness and injustice find their way between the nearest and dearest ties—between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters; and that though these *are* distressing evils, they are not peculiar to the relation of governess and employer; and moreover that she has at least one advantage over those bound by natural ties, that she can, if they be found intolerable, at once break through them. From some of these annoyances she will escape by a greater

degree of independence. She will feel that her schoolroom is the scene of her usefulness, and of her power, and also of her private recreations. She will not seek the family circle, still less thrust herself into it, *unsought*: if she be amiable and obliging, she will *not* be *unsought*: but she should remember that domestic privacy, which may be protected from friends and acquaintance, at pleasure, cannot be maintained, if one who is living *in* the family, and yet not *of* it, is careless of infringing that privacy unsolicited. This want of independence in young governesses, has I believe caused them many painful and needless mortifications. Still the members of the family must remember, that they have their duties to perform, and that to sacrifice some of their private feelings, for the comfort and recreation of their children's instructress, is among them. If she is amiable, and accomplished, the sacrifice is more than repaid; if not, she is probably unsuited to the situation she holds: but at all events, while they retain her, they have clearly a christian duty to perform towards her.

I have spoken of the evils of pride in a governess, but there is a *self-respect* far removed from pride, which it is for her happiness, as for that of every one, to cultivate; it does not result from an exalted opinion of our own personal claims, but from a just view of our actual position, as man or woman, wherever God's providence has placed us;—a view which will not be liable to irritating disturbance from the sentiments of those around us,—be they those of the world in general, or of that circle in the world, to which we belong.

A governess, for example, who takes a right view of

her situation, will feel that she is not a dependent of the family in which she has engaged herself, that she enters it voluntarily, and can quit it at pleasure;—that she has undertaken a profession of which she has no reason to be ashamed, and duties which are highly honourable, so long as they are faithfully performed; and for which, it is right and fitting,—and therefore no degradation to her,—that she should receive remuneration; any more than it is degrading to physicians and lawyers, that they should be paid for the benefit they confer, or are supposed to confer, on society.

She will not therefore suspect that others intend to slight, or look down upon her. She knows that her situation is necessarily *isolated*,—since she is, as it were, transplanted into a foreign soil, and not even intended to take root there. This is indeed one among the natural evils of her position; but it is one she will have contemplated beforehand; and instead of repining over it, she will seek to lessen her own sense of it, by cherishing kindly sympathies with others. Hers is, after all, but an epitome of our real position on earth, where we have no abiding home, or resting-place. It is on the consciousness of duties well-performed, that she must principally depend for her happiness;—other pleasures may arise, but she will do well not to look out for them too anxiously, nor to expect more particular pleasure in the *details* of her profession, than most of those who earn their bread do in theirs. Well for her, as for us all, it is, if we can simply resolve to do our duty in the sight of our heavenly Father,—*because it is our duty*—and let the rest be as it may.

Yet that result is much oftener favourable than otherwise. A governess must feel, that however dry and fatiguing in detail, her task is indeed a much more noble and interesting one than that which is assigned to the money-getting mass of mankind; and that if less worthily remunerated, in a pecuniary sense, it is, when faithfully executed, more amply repaid in love and gratitude.

Alexander said, that he owed more to Aristotle than to his father. We have no female Alexanders, still less female Aristotles; but there are not a few young persons who have to make a similar, often a much higher acknowledgement to their instructors—inasmuch as the lessons of a christian teacher involve influences, which the heathen philosopher and his royal pupil did not dream of.

An amiable and intelligent woman who discharges her duties faithfully, does indeed usually win for herself the love and friendship both of her employers and of her pupils; and the intercourse between them, after the education tie is dissolved, often proves one of the solaces of her after-life, as it is one of the gratifications of theirs.

In this view of the relations of domestic life, both in the married and single state, I have looked chiefly, though not exclusively, to women, as falling most within my province, and as exercising, in the character of mothers, wives, sisters, friends or teachers, a very powerful influence over society at large. One would wish I think to observe a more direct influence exerted by them over purity of morals, so that the intimate circle drawn

around the domestic hearth at least, might be preserved from that mixture of evil, which belongs inevitably to a larger and looser connection with the world.

It may be doubted whether women have ever exerted a proper influence in favour of their own sex; of those among them I mean, who are dependent, or depressed, or neglected,—and whether, instead of that *esprit de corps*, which talks largely about the rights of women, it would not be becoming to extend a little more ready sympathy with, and gentle protective influence in favour of, those classes of their sisterhood, who lie most exposed to neglect, or to some of the many evils from which they may be tempted to escape by sinking into what Paul Richter has called, "the sheltered citizenship of marriage."

CHAPTER III.

EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES OF THE AGE.

Section 1.—General Remarks.

If the culture and intelligence of the age we live in, and above all, the more general recognition of the duties and ordinances of Christianity have produced a decided improvement in our social and domestic relations, we may expect that they will have exerted a no less beneficial effect on educational influences. By educational influences I mean, the influence which legislators, parents, guardians, and teachers possess over the minds of the rising generation:—legislators, in their power of promoting, controlling, and directing public education; parents and guardians, as carrying on the same controlling and directing influence over private education, —or as it may happen, of entering personally into the work; and teachers, as acting out the views of legislators or parents, in their public or private, domestic or ex-domestic capacities.

With the effects of legislative educational enactments, we have little to do in such an inquiry as this, both because it is limited, and because they relate chiefly to the training of the poorer classes of society. But the subject can scarcely be dismissed, without remarking that educational movements—beginning with the lowest

classes,—form a distinctive feature of the age we live in, and, working upwards, have already begun to influence the whole mass of society.

In connection too with this important and interesting point, it may not be unsuitable to remark that the best system of teaching which has ever gone forth, was set on foot by the legislature of this country in the year 1832, and is now working a vast change in the intelligence and morals of one class at least of British subjects; and uniting, as far as local and party prejudice will admit, the members of various religious denominations in those points of their common faith which do not interfere with liberty of conscience. The fact that about 400,000 children are undergoing such a course of education, deserves notice here, as one of the most remarkable and valuable proofs of the advance of civilization in the present age.

Over the improvement which has taken place in the state of public schools for the higher classes, both intellectually, morally, and in respect of religious instruction, during the last fourteen or fifteen years, there is also cause to rejoice; though *he* is gone to his early rest, who first attempted to infuse a higher tone of christian morality, and a more liberal system of instruction into the public education of youth.

What our public system in point of religious instruction *was*, is well known to all who partook its disadvantages. It may be judged of by others, through many notorious facts: among them it was mentioned to me by a noble person who had been educated at one of our first public seminaries, that during the whole course of

his educational career he never *saw* a bible, or heard one single word which implied any religious belief; and that at church the occupation of those boys who could escape observation,—which it was not difficult to do,—was reading novels. Many similar anecdotes could be given from other sources, and connected with other seats of education; but this is sufficient to mark what *was* the state of things in connection with this subject, and enable us to contrast it favourably with what is; though doubtless much more remains to be done.

I turn then to that part of the subject which more particularly belongs to our present inquiry,—how far, viz. the *private* educational influences of domestic life, (using the word education in its most extended sense,) under parents and other natural guardians, or persons authorized and chosen by them, are efficient in the purpose of training the children of this generation through infancy, up to that period of youth when they take their position as members of society.

Unfortunately there are many cross influences in the education of the higher classes. Parents, however they may theorize on the advantages of devoting themselves unaided to the education (meaning care, as well as teaching) of their children, must employ agents. Nursemaids are among the earliest; and so important is early influence, that the choice of these, and an incessant watchfulness over them, are among the first duties of the mother. Good sense and good principles,—religious principles, for none other are to be depended on in the daily and hourly trials of life,—must form the first requisitions; all else may be taught.

The next influence is usually that of a nursery-governess. This, or some other assistance beyond that of the nurse who has brought them up from infants, and whose attention is probably already engaged by one,—is very desirable. Circumstances often not only allow, but oblige, the mother, or one who does a mother's part by them, to take this office on herself; and removing them from the nursery, to attend to them both generally, and at meals, where good manners and good discipline may be imbibed as well as taught; and where faults may be easily corrected as they arise. To give the first rudiments of learning also, is so interesting a task, that a mother can seldom resolve to resign it entirely into the hands of another, till her family multiply so as to render her incapable of maintaining that regularity in her teaching which is essential in early education, and difficult to maintain without an assistant.

Then comes the period when this assistance is required for other purposes. If the mother undertakes the office of governess, with or without the aid of masters, she will still feel the want of some person of good manners and good principles, on whom she can depend, to walk out with her children, and superintend their more noisy recreations. For this purpose, a foreigner is often preferable to an English person, and is of use in familiarizing young people with another language; though it is quite essential that this person should be one of their own faith. But if, as is usually the case, a mother is unable from circumstances to carry out her children's education herself, she has recourse to a governess. In some of these educational arrangements, the influence

of the mother seems at first sight to escape entirely into other hands. But it is not really so, or at least will not be so, if she faithfully discharge her own duty. Whatever circumstances may induce or oblige her to multiply her assistants,—hers will be the influence breathed through all, and each; she cannot lay this charge aside, awful as is the responsibility,—the faults of those whom she has placed about her children, will be felt by her, in a great measure, as her own, and they should be repaired as such, the moment that they are discovered. Yet there are difficulties which meet her on this subject not very easy to be surmounted. In the atmosphere of a school-room much unhappiness, much bad training for the young minds who inhabit it, may be going on, without the mother's being in the smallest degree aware of it. She engages a person highly recommended as sensible, accomplished, and well-principled, and yet, —her children may be exposed to unhappy and unhealthy influences through some fault of temper, or selfishness, or injustice in their governess, wholly unknown to her. And here comes in a great perplexity, viz. that it is so hard to discover the faults of those, whose interest it may be to conceal them from us,—especially faults of temper. And one of the greatest disadvantages, perhaps, attendant on this plan of education for children, is the difficulty of being fully aware of all that passes in the school-room, where young people are completely in the power of their governess, in whom (honoured and excellent as are many who embrace the profession) we must be liable, at least, to meet with faults, as we do in other people, destructive of the hap-

piness, and injurious to the disposition of those about them.

Affectionate mothers, who are on confidential terms with their children, take it for granted, that they will readily pour out into their ears all the troubles which make them unhappy, and that no unkindness or neglect can be going on, without their being made aware of it. But they are mistaken, I believe; and this mistake arises partly, I think, from a false view of the dispositions of children. They are generally supposed to be by nature open and confiding; careful observation, however, and the recollection of ourselves at the period of childhood, will convince us, that this is not generally the case; that they are, for the most part, on the contrary, reserved and cautious. Their cautiousness, that self-preserving instinct which they share in common with brutes, shows itself at a very early age: I have seen little children afraid to mention a knock or pinch given them by their nursemaids,—and actually deny it, through dread of being afterwards exposed to further ill treatment; and I know that older children have really often been made miserable, by faults of temper and acts of petty tyranny in their superintendent, while all the time their mother supposes them perfectly happy. To tell what they suffer, seems to be the last thing thought of, as it does not cross their minds that the evil can be removed, and they have an instinctive dread lest their mother's taking notice of it to their governess, should make matters worse than before; so that they would rather go on bearing the grievances they are accustomed to bear, than run the risk of worse things.

I have known most painful examples of what I am asserting,—of some children who have for years been subject to the most painful tyranny, without ever mentioning it, until the cause has, by some fortunate circumstance, been removed,—and of others, whose tempers have been injured by a mixture of affection and injustice in those about them, wholly unsuspected at the time by their natural guardians.

But children do not suffer such treatment the more patiently, because they conceal it from their parents; on the contrary, this very concealment embitters their sense of the wrong done them. When alone with each other, the conduct of their governess is their constant theme of conversation, and their greatest comfort is derived from venting their feelings to each other. Thus some tempers among them are soured, and others cowed, by a series of unjust and wayward ebullitions.

It may be said, that these are extreme cases, which cannot often occur, if the governess be chosen with care; but I fear that the cases are far from uncommon; and that no care in their choice can entirely secure parents from the liability of being deceived, though probably not *intentionally* deceived, by the persons themselves. For unfortunately, the very circumstances which usually lead young women to undertake such a charge, have a tendency to sour the temper; and self-command is a lesson not sufficiently taught in childhood or learned in youth; while few can be safely trusted with power, whose sense of justice is not quickened by grace divine.

But supposing the governess to possess many attractive qualities, and that our children appear to us fond of

her, we must not feel too secure that all is right,—that they are happy and well-managed. Children are so ready to love, that some degree of affection in their governess, some sympathy on her part in their pleasures,—especially if she be an accomplished pleasing person,—will ensure a portion of affection in return. Yet all the while they may be suffering acutely at intervals, from her ill-governed temper; and her caprice and sensitiveness may be really injuring the strength and healthfulness of their minds.

Here then seems a great difficulty. Is a mother's influence so powerless, her authority so circumscribed, that it cannot penetrate the mysteries of the school-room? Yet it is not easy to guard against evils whose existence we do not wish to suspect, and have scanty means of ascertaining. To induce a habit of watching for, and catching at, every impatient word that may be said to our children, is dangerous to themselves, and unjust to their instructor, and also interferes with the respect due to her.

Still it is essential that a parent should be aware of the state of things going on in her school-room, and that her influence should be felt by her children, even there. No woman who acts up to her high calling with honesty of purpose, will regret that such must be the case; on the contrary, she will feel that her employer's confidence would be best established by a thorough knowledge of what passes in her little domains; or if she is conscious of an imperfect self-government, but desires to obtain it, she will feel that this check to self-indulgence is as wholesome for herself as for her pupils, and

will assist those higher motives which are, we may believe, urging her to obtain it*.

To have our children alone with us a portion of every day, appears to be a paramount duty, however high may be our opinion of the person to whose charge we have given them,—however superior we may even think her to ourselves. In no other way can the sacred bond of parental love and confidence be preserved. I say parental, not merely maternal, because I think that this obligation extends as much to the father. And it is perhaps *more* essential to the preservation of that tenderness and confidence, which can seldom be established between him and them in after-life, if it is not cherished in their early years.

In these interviews with our children, they should be induced to give an account of the incidents of their lives while separate from us; we should inquire how far their governess has been satisfied with them; and obtain from them as far as possible such a detail of the events of the school-room, (not involving complaints against their governess; for only a very serious occasion would justify this) as shall enable us to see clearly how things are going on, and whether our children are happy there. In these daily reunions, perfect confidence will be established, and our children will feel, when anything is on their minds, that it is impossible to conceal it from their best friends; while they will derive the greatest benefit from our judicious remarks, (not reproofs—for

* And here it may be observed that any petty acts of selfishness or of ill-breeding, any unpleasant ways, or habits, indulged before children in a school-room, will totally prevent the respect they ought to feel for her who presides over it, and even awaken an unmerited disgust in their minds towards her.

that is not the suitable occasion for reproof) on their conduct, and on the incidents they relate, so that our influence will be habitually maintained even during the hours of their separation from us.

But in noticing the evils connected with that system of school-room isolation which belongs particularly to the present age, and the duty of guarding our children against them, and especially against such as are connected with the tempers of those to whose charge we commit them,—it is well to remember, whether in the character of mothers, or as kind and faithful governesses, that no love on our parts to our children, or our pupils, will secure us from temptations to caprice, or pettishness, or injustice, if we are not on the watch against the vacillations of health, and spirits, and temper, in ourselves. I say on the watch, because we are liable not to recognize their effects as faults, but to be satisfied in accounting for them by the fact that we are "out of spirits and worried," or "the children particularly naughty." Whereas—if we call things by their right names,—to reprove a fault one day which we pass over the next, in consequence of a change in our own feelings, is caprice; to reprove because we are ourselves out of sorts, is pettishness; to reprove in proportion to the annoyance *caused to us* by a fault, is injustice.

Section 2.—Early Education.

Early education is still, as formerly, much the same for both sexes; and the habit of obedience is, for both, the first and most important upon which it can teach; for on this, must all our moral discipline be based. But this very duty of enforcing obedience, sanctioned as it is by Divine command, implies on our parts an awful responsibility, lest we should exercise the rights it gives us for any selfish or unjust purpose, instead of the pure good of the little being to whom we are thus made a law.

The relation of parent or guardian, and child, seems to bear some analogy to that in which we ourselves stand towards the great God and Father of all,—an analogy which has been fully recognized by our Divine teacher; and it is, in fact, this very habit of affectionate trust and obedience, in which a well-trained child * is exercised towards its earthly parents, which is transferred in after-life,—and with the less effort in consequence of this discipline,—to God. But we do not profit by the teaching which this analogy affords, if we are always in the habit of explaining our reasons to our children, whenever we claim their obedience. It is well, indeed, occasionally to do this, *after the act of obedience has been performed*, in order both to open their understandings, and to show cause for their trust in us when we do not think fit to explain; and our reasons should be unfolded

* See Essay on the Example of Children, by Archbishop Whately.

more and more, as they advance in years and knowledge; for it is so our heavenly Father deals with us.

With respect to teaching,—book teaching,—it is not very important how early we begin the rudiments of learning with our children; and much must depend on circumstances connected with their physical condition. I once began to teach a child of good capacity, and apparently good health, at three years old; she found great difficulty in learning her letters, and I perceived that it was a very useless trial of temper; at four and a half she learnt readily. Her sister could read stories of one syllable with ease at three years. But early precocity has usually so little connection with future mental attainments, that many instances could be given, especially of boys, whom it was found impossible to teach till a much later period, who yet were afterwards distinguished for their attainments.

In order to strengthen the powers of attention, it is very important in our lessons to avoid as much as possible, digression, which children are so fond of, and which is so much more amusing to teachers, than the steady application of a quarter or half of an hour at the well-thumbed page. A few words, or facts, got thoroughly into the mind,—perhaps a single one, a single letter,—is a step made on the ladder of learning, and is a much less fatiguing process to the attention, than that excursive mode of teaching, which allows the little pupil to ask half a dozen questions in the course of as many lines; because each question draws aside the attention from the matter in hand, and causes the same fatigue in returning to it, as was occasioned by the first attempt. When the

lesson is finished,—and however short, it should be such as not to fatigue the child's mind,—then, the reward should be to ask us questions, and part of the subsequent lesson, to try and answer ours. This of course alludes to very early education; some of the remarks on the second stage of childhood, suit also the latter part of this, and *vice versâ*, where the two periods slide into each other.

With respect to the religious instruction of children, it is rather the custom of the age to do too much, than too little. That gradual teaching which Scripture recommends, has been exchanged for an attempt to infuse the faith and feelings of advanced Christians into the minds of children. Yet to make them repeat words which they are incapable of understanding, and express feelings to which their young hearts cannot respond, is, in fact, to give them their first lesson in that sort of practical hypocrisy, or formalism, which it will be their life-long struggle to contend with. Rather should it be the business of parents, to impart to their children the simple rudiments of our faith,—"line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," under the corrective feeling, that we who teach, are also as children in the sight of God. The history of our Saviour's life, if not told before they are able to understand or feel it, may be made delightful even to young children, but it should never be forced on the attention. To *wait*, is one of the first lessons which parents would do well to learn, though we are apt to learn it chiefly through the humiliation of experience. To excite the minds of sensitive children on religious subjects, is, indeed, not at all difficult, as many of the stories of infant scenes and infant

death-beds may show. It is of little importance perhaps to a *dying* child whether the language of Scripture be presented to it in a literal sense or not; but on others, it is liable to produce dangerous results in after-life.

The following anecdote was related to us by the "friend" alluded to; and though it belongs rather to the second stage of childhood, it affords an illustration of the subject in hand.

A little girl, the child of strictly religious parents, was dying of decline; she was one day visited by a friend of the family, who, being told that the young sufferer was aware of her condition, began to talk to her of the hopes of a better life, and was rejoiced to hear her say that she did not fear death, but was perfectly happy. She was, however, astonished presently after, to find that the child had derived her notions concerning Heaven from the literal interpretation of the visions of St. John, which she had been in the habit of reading in her little books, which gave a *distinct,* and one might even say a *worldly* description, of that "which eye hath not seen." Her talk was of the fine golden crown she was to wear, and the jewelled streets she was to walk in—scarcely a thought of the Saviour who had redeemed her, or the sins for which she needed forgiveness, found a place in the mind which was thus worldly and frivolous, even while speaking of heavenly things. The lady who was visiting her, was grieved to see her, in what she believed to be so wrong a state of mind; but on her attempting to direct her young friend's views to the things which "*are* revealed," the mother immediately interfered, and told her that the child was in a blessed state, and that it

would be sinful to seek to change her feelings or sentiments in the slightest degree.

SECTION 3.—SECOND STAGE OF EDUCATION.

In the years succeeding infancy, varieties of temperament, of tastes and faculties, and also the period of their respective development, demand our careful attention. In some children, the knowing faculties being full and active, while those connected with the reason are ill-developed and languid, and *vice versâ*—they require very different treatment. To direct towards suitable objects, but not to over-stimulate, the faculties to which nature has given fullness and activity, and to excite and bring into action such as are more feebly developed, seem to be among the most important subjects of attention at this period of education, and they are subjects on which phrenology,—from the light it has thrown on the workings of the human mind,—promises to afford most important assistance. Such attention will show, what accomplishments, and what branches of knowledge may be cultivated with probability of success; and hence, much time, and labour, and patience, and much also of actual suffering, spared to the unfortunate pupils who may have been destined to excell in *all* elegant accomplishments and knowledge.

The attempt to make the act of learning easy and amusing, has been one of some years' standing; but it is usually found, I believe, a failure; for though the *results* of learning may be made interesting, and a taste for literature and science cultivated in young minds by

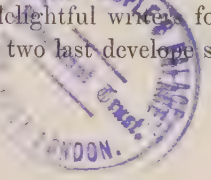
suitable books and interesting conversation, yet there must always be a considerable portion of dry labour in the act of acquiring knowledge; a labour which we vainly attempt to save our pupils, and which is in fact good discipline to their understandings. By lifting them over the ground, as it is called, they *appear* to make progress, but after all our pains, they will be found not to have really learnt their way, nor to be capable of finding it again if left to themselves; those only can do this, who have made every step sure; and those only who have done this, can be said to have made real progress. It is on this account that examination bears so important a part in education, because it not only enables the teacher to test progress, but the pupil, to be sure of what he really knows. No young people will read with energy, that of which they feel they have no account to give; and a much smaller portion of any given subject studied under this responsibility, will be found more available than any amount of reading without it, because the necessity of re-producing will have obliged the student to master his subject and make a lodgement of it in his mind. The want of this mode of teaching, or the carelessness with which examinations are conducted in a school-room, accounts for the fact, that the knowledge which girls acquire is so often a mere smattering, while most boys retain from their school course, a certain portion which remains by them in after-life.

I cannot omit, when considering the present mode of education in this its second stage, all mention of the subject of recreation, which bears so important a part in the training of children. It is sometimes permitted to

young girls, as mere children, to read novels, not merely to hear them read,—because circumstances may make this unavoidable, and besides, in this way, portions unsuited to a childish audience may easily be omitted,—but to read them as part of their private recreations. I do not know a worse. For supposing that they comprehend as little as their parents desire and suppose, of parts unsuited, or objectionable for their age, what can be more injurious to the simplicity of their minds, than the introducing them thus early to a knowledge of men and manners, and allowing impressions from this knowledge to be made on their minds utterly unknown to their teachers and parents, and therefore impossible to correct, which may hang about them long after the story is forgotten? I allude especially to what have been called novels of social life. But supposing that children can derive no lasting injury from what they read in this way, beyond the excitement of mind which is produced; there is some evil in spoiling their taste for the simpler and more juvenile volumes with which modern literature abounds, combining instruction and amusement more suited to their age than that which they obtain from novels and novelettes; for we must acknowledge that many books written expressly for children deserve no better title. The injudicious habit, for instance, of dwelling on personal charms, which some of these publications,—otherwise of great merit,—indulge in, seems to me, to transplant into them those very portions of the novel, which children are best able to comprehend, and most likely to adopt. The habit of dwelling on fair brows, and flowing hair, and blue eyes, and sweeping eyelashes, and

polished brows, does, I have no doubt, contribute to foster, in childish mind, an undue estimate of personal advantages, and to deprive them of that simplicity and self-thoughtless grace, which we so often miss in the children of this generation.

Miss Edgeworth knew better how to write for children; and her charming books, which one reads in later life with some of the renovated feeling of childhood, and higher appreciation of their merit, might afford useful hints to modern writers. It is much to be regretted that her morality is sometimes founded on mercenary, or at least selfish motives, as "that he who tells untruths will soon cease to be trusted," and "that honesty is the best policy," &c. Other motives, indeed, such as compassion, generosity, the desire of approbation from the wise and good, are also set beautifully forth, and are surely more congenial to the amiable authoress's own character; these too, are motives on which we were doubtless intended to act, since they form part of the moral law implanted in our hearts; but we must all wish that she had told her young readers, how, in being kind, forbearing, compassionate, &c., they were doing God's will, and working Christ's works. Remarks of this nature may indeed be supplied by parents or teachers, and moral lessons like these, containing *no* religious views, though far from the best, are less dangerous than such as leave on a child's mind a single *false* one: so much easier is it to supply a defect, than to remove a wrong impression. Miss Martineau, Miss Sedgwick, and Jacob Abbott, are the most delightful writers for children of the present day. The two last develope so



admirably the practical principles of Christianity in their incidents and characters, that their stories might be called, Tales illustrative of Christian Principles.

There is another very interesting class of books, which address themselves perhaps rather more (as do indeed *some* of those to which I have been referring) to the next stage of youthful life. I mean those of which "Amy Herbert" is a favourable specimen, containing interesting domestic sketches, written with great purity of taste and in a truly christian spirit. But unfortunately, whilst declaiming against high desires, &c., the authors usually place rank and wealth in so prominent a position, and throw so much romantic interest around them, as to cause a very undue estimate of these things in the eyes of their young readers, and a connection of them with all their ideas of exalted happiness. Amy even,—a most amiable, intelligent and well-brought up child, an only child, who possesses in her elegant and modest home, all that the most fastidious mind can desire,—is represented as undergoing a real trial, and one which is acknowledged as such by her mother, when she partakes of the more extended luxuries of her uncle's establishment. Now this appears to me unnatural; and I think that these feelings could not exist in any tolerably well-regulated mind, unless it had been subjected to the hardships of poverty, or rather of severe economy, which latter, naturally induces an over-estimate of wealth.

There is another circumstance to regret in this class of books, viz. that they rest too much on church-ordinances, so as to lead young people to think that Divine Grace comes to us chiefly, if not solely, through this

medium; and that they dwell too much on creeds drawn up by fallible mortals, and too little on the simple teaching of the bible *.

To return to the training of our children: it is not unwise books alone which cherish in young people ideas of the importance of personal attractions; the excessive attention to the subject of dress, and its ill-judged womanliness, so often detrimental to healthful growth and natural habits, do very much tend both to present and to future self-engrossment.

While on the subject of recreation, I must remark upon one which was prevalent some years ago, then dropped, and has since been renewed,—I mean children's balls. They seem to involve most of the evils of adult assemblies, without any of their supposed advantages. *Every* social meeting is a recreation to children, if properly managed. But these balls seem to involve just those circumstances which one would wish to exclude from childish amusements,—late hours, crowded rooms, strong lights, heat, rivalry in dress, in personal beauty, in dancing, and even in partners,—elements of evil, which, besides the other temptations they involve, tend to produce that conscious, vain, and conceited kind of manner, so unpleasant to witness at any age, but so actually painful to observe, among young creatures, whose principal charm consists in their *not* being men and women.

* Margaret Percival, a beautifully written novel by the author of Amy Herbert, possesses these faults in an exaggerated form. One leaves the book with the impression that the heroine ought to belong to the church of Rome, and that she is culpably and unnaturally inconsistent in her adherence to her own.

In excluding children's balls from the list of childish amusements, a parent should not however be unmindful to relieve from time to time, by wholesome interruptions, —and especially by social amusements with young people of their own age,—the dull monotony of school-room life, during the years in which it is usually less broken, than at an earlier or later period. And in no way, perhaps, can this be more agreeably or usefully accomplished, than by what may be called domestic festivals,—birthdays, &c., in which occasionally, if possible, their young friends should be associated, and their poorer neighbours in some way connected. These festivals, though not to be confined to this period of life, should begin, now, at latest, to be celebrated. When well-managed, they form a great charm to all parties concerned, both in anticipation and in enjoyment; they are a means of expanding the domestic affections, and will, at a later period of life,—of a healthy life at least,—form delightful reminiscences.

It has been objected to these early home festivals, that they form a nucleus hereafter for mournful recollections to cluster around. I cannot admit this. What if they be hereafter clouded,—say rather, tempered,—by the thought, that some who shared them are no more; can we consecrate that part of their memory which belongs to social life, better, than by this union of it with our innocent social mirth? And how can that mirth be more gently chastened, we will not say saddened, than by a passing thought, that these hours of pleasure were once shared—perhaps planned, by those, who,—their own business with life ended,—are awaiting (we hope) better joys in the life to come?

The subject of punishment becomes very important at this second stage of education. The misuse of punishment, including under the definition *severe reproach*, was more particularly the fault of the last age; as the excessive use of reward,—reward implying *competition*, and having for its object *moral* merit,—is the prevailing tendency of the present. Both seem to offer temptations to very distressing faults. Punishment induces fear, and fear falsehood; in nine cases out of ten, a lie is told through fear. Now though punishment may occasionally be necessary, we ought at least to remind ourselves what the temptation is, to which it exposes our children. When well-governed, they require few punishments;—but certainly of all punishments, continued reproach is the worst; it is an unequal punishment too, for while it passes unheeded over harder and coarser natures, it is felt keenly by the most conscientious minds, is dangerously depressing to their moral courage, and calls out all the peculiar faults of their nature. Yet reproach is made use of by many, who would shrink from inflicting what *they consider* punishment.

The use of reward is also a delicate point; that which implies competition involves two dangers, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to escape, viz. the temptation to a spirit of rivalry or even of jealousy; and,—if used for moral merit,—the introduction of mercenary motives. It is vain to fancy that we can, in our systems of reward and punishment, imitate those of God. In us, the fear of future punishment can never induce untruthfulness towards Him, before whom we are aware that all hearts are open; nor can the hope of reward

excite jealousy, where the success of one man implies no loss to his fellow. In *our* spiritual course, "*all* run," but "*not uncertainly*," for *all may* "obtain the prize;" but it is quite different with the rewards which man can alone institute for man.

As soon as possible I think, our corrections should lose altogether the character of punishments, which are suited (if to any) to little children only; and should assume that of privation,—privation which is felt as such, only or chiefly because it is avowedly used as a means of correction, where admonition has been found unavailing. And our children should see that we use such means, because others *have* been found unavailing; in which case, they will almost invariably acquiesce in the justice of our proceedings.

It is essential to the happiness of children, that we should pardon promptly, as soon as they express sorrow for a fault; and that we should teach them how far only *we can* pardon, and where and how we all look for pardon of sin; though too frequent allusion to so sacred a fact, in the numerous faults which must occur among them, would weaken its impression, and therefore be very dangerous. To maintain a cold aspect towards young people, one moment longer than is absolutely necessary, or to assume it at all, without taking care that they are fully sensible of the cause, is another fault in our treatment of them; for it tends to cherish an anxious temper, and deprives them of that cheerful unsuspecting confidence, which is essential to the healthfulness of their minds.

Some systems of punishment are built on the sense

of shame. Children are made to wear a certain badge of disgrace, or to have their faults recorded before the assembled family, or before strangers. This punishment is mainly depended on in schools, especially in girls' schools; and the employment of such a mode of punishment is defended, on the ground that it is more keenly felt than any other. That it is more keenly felt, is true; but this seems to me its chief objection, for,—it has been well remarked, "Shame is such a fine weapon, that we should beware of tampering with it, lest we should blunt its edge." The evils belonging to such a system are, first, that the pain inflicted by it is a bad kind of pain; bad, because it is not the pain of humble contrition, but of forced humiliation,—and humiliation forced upon us by others, has a tendency to beget pride, not humility: secondly, because it is unequally felt by children of different dispositions: and thirdly, because the effect of working frequently, and strongly, on the sensibilities of children, but particularly on those connected with disgrace, is calculated to make some minds morbidly and slavishly in awe of the opinion of their fellow-creatures, and to make others callous in respect of that very sense of shame which we are using as an instrument.

A good system of *marks* has been found in some school-rooms the most useful of all restraints, actually superseding, with few exceptions, all other punishments. It has been adopted rather early, and carried through the second period of childhood with the greatest advantage. A scale of faults has been marked on a slate; not moral faults, but the *signs* of them,—sharp words, slamming doors, flinging down books, &c., which may

be called the outward signs of temper, and in which the suppression of the *manifestation* is part of the cure;—inattention, slovenliness, irregular hours, ill-breeding, tricks, all come into such a catalogue. These marks were put down on a slate hanging up in the school-room, and read over the last day of the week, when they were copied into a book. This copying was always felt strongly; but no mark was ever rubbed off in the course of the week even by the youngest child, and the children often marked themselves. There was no reward for few marks; a mild reproof to those who had many, and some slight privation for an accumulation of them, formed the sole result. The fact of having a mark was felt just sufficiently, in order to operate as a check.

With respect to rewards, they have their use, if discreetly administered, and not bestowed for *moral* qualities; whose only reward should be a word of approval, and a hint that they are pleasing to our Heavenly Father: this will usually be found sufficient. The proper use of approbation, indeed, must not be overlooked in education; if we blame, we must also praise, or rather *approve*—for the approbation of our elders, which resembles the calm approval of our own conscience, is the safest kind of reward for moral merit. Still I *know* that good use has been made of tangible rewards, with a view to conquering faults which have taken the type of habits, and of stimulating to general improvement; but I would rather give them as prizes at fixed times, in the form of an established boon, without competition, and which misbehaviour only should forfeit, lest rivalry and a mercenary spirit should be awakened by them in our child-

ren. Under such a form too, rewards would be likely to have the good effect of communicating cheerfulness and activity, with a little pleasant excitation, to the atmosphere of a school-room.

The manner of giving religious instruction is very important during this second period of education. Children of seven or eight years are, if judiciously taught, more easily interested on religious subjects, especially in scripture history, than at a later period;—partly because religious instruction has lost by this time its novelty and freshness,—partly because it is often, unfortunately, made too much of a task, and too little a subject of mutual interest between parent and child; and partly too because habits of formalism have often been established in the minds of our children, by attendance on the public services of the church, or on domestic worship, before they can understand or enter into the spirit of either. It is to be regretted that we do not possess a public Service suited to children, which might include catechizing, instead of a sermon, and be so constituted as to be not unsuited for grown persons. Meanwhile, however, it has been found, that a domestic service of the kind has answered every purpose that could be desired; and that this first introduction to social worship, with nothing to divert the attention, this conscious union with others of their family in prayer, which ceased before the attention began to flag, has been highly satisfactory in its results, and has enabled the parents to delay their children's attendance on public service; a service which can only be imperfectly understood by them, and whose length involves a painful restraint, relieved to young

children only by the amusement of looking about them; or worse still, which fosters in them the habit of repeating words, to which they attach no meaning, or to which they can give no heed,—a habit of saying prayers without praying,—learnt in youth, and not *always*, or easily, unlearnt in riper years.

SECTION 4.—CLOSING YEARS OF EDUCATION.

I take up the subject of education again, at its third, and most anxious period, and inquire what use is made of those few important years which precede the entrance of our sons on their professional or college course, and of our daughters into society;—the last years perhaps of home life and home influences. Wise parents will be making the most of them; they will be gradually suffering their authority to merge into friendship,—a friendship mingled on the one side with respect, warmed on both sides with mutual tenderness, but which unless it be established before the period of legal independence, seldom takes place at all. Yet on this friendship, and the confidence implied in it, depends almost all the useful influence which parental affection can exercise in after-life. The importance indeed of perfect confidence between a son and his father, can scarcely be over estimated; a mother's influence, however tender and sacred, cannot step between her son and temptation; but a father, if he has awakened in his son the same affectionate trust and openness, will know how to make a better use of it.

Under every system of education, a great difference,

as connected with their respective results, awaits the two sexes in their future career,—a difference which begins to be felt during this last period of school and school-room life, and which has a tendency to stimulate the exertions of the one sex, and to relax those of the other. Every young man is aware that his knowledge will be put to the proof sooner or later, in whatever profession he may embrace; and this expected trial usually affords sufficient stimulus to his exertions. But no such proof, or trial, awaits a young woman. If her accomplishments and information enable her to pass muster in society, it is enough. No one will take the trouble to inquire whether she really knows anything of the subjects which are discussed around her, or the events which have happened in the world to which she belongs. If, therefore, she has been educated with a view to the figure she is to make in society, her exertions will be damped, from the period when this fact dawns upon her; and if there is no natural love of information, or if the advantages resulting from a sound education, and above all, if the duty of improving the talent committed to us, have not been put before her, or have failed to exert any influence over her, there are no external means of exciting her energies.

With respect to our sons, this is usually the period when circumstances have combined to decide on their profession. It seems to be the present opinion, that it is very important for a boy to chuse his own profession; though not only does this entire freedom of choice frequently involve great difficulty to a parent, but there are other practical disadvantages connected with it; for in consequence of a want of self-knowledge, as well as

of worldly knowledge, those who are left entirely to their own choice, often lose the best years of life before they have made up their minds on the subject; and the cross influences which occur after a young man has grown up make it then a still more difficult one. There is however usually a bent, or at least a manifestation of certain tastes and talents, during boyhood,—often during early boyhood,—which a parent does well to mark, (and will usually have cause to regret if he disregard) as indicating the particular profession or business best suited to his son. The Church will of course be excepted; or rather, the views of a parent towards this profession will be suspended; because, even where a strong bent to this sacred calling exists, no parent, and no young man himself, can judge of his general fitness or qualification for it, till a later period. There seems to be rather too much importance attached, in the present day, to the *choice* of a profession, by several classes of persons. Some think that certain professions only are suited to a gentleman; others, that certain occupations only are fitted to men of good attainments and superior minds; and others, again, consider the choice of a profession as a sort of religious act, and a bent towards it a kind of sacred call. The first opinion is founded on a prejudice rapidly yielding to the circumstances of the age we live in; unsuited to a commercial country like our own, and one which our aristocracy themselves have not felt inclined or able to maintain. The second is one which, through the diffusion of education, has a tendency to become more general instead of diminishing. The third seems to be founded on a mistaken view of the purposes for which

a profession is chosen: for those persons who consider it as a sacred act, forget that the selection of a profession is, with few exceptions, neither more nor less than a choice of the mode in which a man shall earn his bread. It being the will of God that the mass of mankind shall labour for their subsistence, either by manual or mental exertion, or by both, it would seem that the *mode* (with one great exception,—the Church) must be unimportant, unless it should involve temptations or duties which are likely to injure a man's moral or christian feelings. It is as a citizen of the world—a member of the social and domestic circles,—not as the member of a particular profession, that a man's most sacred calling is marked out for him; though of course each profession has its own duties, to a faithful discharge of which, every one who adopts it is bound. Again, to reject, as in the second case, all professions which are not in themselves tasteful to a young man, or calculated to expand his peculiar endowments, however the circumstances of his situation may point towards them, seems to be a tendency of the age, resulting from the general diffusion of education, and consequent sharpening of men's wits, which renders so much larger a class of persons available for the more intellectual professions. This may grow into a serious evil. If young men of good attainments and intelligence should feel that they cannot submit to earn their bread in a vocation which does not immediately call forth their powers, we shall, in process of time (but, that necessity has no choice), have no unskilled labourers among the lower classes, nor will men of education and intelligence among the

higher be found to fill up the dry and business-like departments of life.

That "the man should adorn the profession, not the profession the man," is a very valuable maxim, and one which may well reconcile a young man to his lot, wherever that lot may be cast. In point of fact, when the profession is not such a one as to engage deeply all the powers of the mind, he is in a better position for devoting his disengaged moments to more important purposes; and consequently, some of the most useful and influential members of society have been those whose own professions have afforded little scope for the development of the higher powers of mind. That our sons should carry from the homes of their childhood the elements of a good citizen and domestic man, is indeed a point of far greater anxiety, than any which connects itself with the particular profession they may adopt.

The close of our daughters' school-room life will find them, if their education has been well conducted, possessed of a certain portion of sound knowledge, and of some of those accomplishments which may be called the luxuries of life; it will also have opened to them the paths of literature, and in so doing, will have secured to them many valuable sources of private enjoyment; and will have furnished them with capabilities of rendering themselves pleasant companions, both in social and domestic life, and of directing at least the education of their own children or of those of others, should such a charge fall to their lot. But we shall have done

much more than this, if we have fulfilled our vocation as parents or guardians. We shall have opened to them some knowledge of the world they are to mix in, both by society at home, by our own conversation, and by well-chosen works on men and manners. We shall have established in them habits of order, a due value for time, and a proper sense of the claims of others,—above all of the poor,—upon their kindness, their charity, and their courtesy; and under the head of Courtesy, I would include that ready, but not over-anxious attention to the customs of society, and to the more trifling claims founded on these, of the persons with whom they mix, to which the name of good-breeding is usually given. But above all, we shall have established this good-breeding where its existence is most important, viz. in our own domestic circle, whence it is most easily and gracefully transferred into social life. Our sons and our daughters will not suffer themselves to transgress with each other, those *bienséances* which they are contented to observe when with strangers, simply because such transgression may take place with impunity in the family circle; yet not, alas! with impunity;—for no strength and sincerity of affection will secure and maintain a constant harmony between young and independent minds, unless they possess that respect for each other's feelings, even on trifling occasions, which involves mutual forbearance and politeness. But there is this solace in the exercise of the self-denial which these observances unquestionably demand in the domestic circle, viz. that they form the best training for a world where all is harmony, and order, and love.

After watching the period of youthful education now before us, through its course to its close, and then following out the objects of it into life, we have often felt disappointed, at the apparently meagre results of a system apparently so well-conducted, and which has been the subject of so much anxious solicitude. Education seems to have done its utmost, in the cultivation of the mind and disposition, of the tastes and manners. Our sons and our daughters have been brought up religiously; we have taken care that they have in some way or other solemnly declared their sense of their own responsibility,—their conviction of the truth of the faith in which they have been educated,—their determination "to fight under Christ's banner against the world, the flesh, and the Devil." And yet when we afterwards meet young people so brought up, in society, and see them act for themselves, we too often find them acting either on principles at variance with their previous education, or we see no result at all in the most important points from this well-organized system. The fruit seemed properly set; but a blight has passed over it in the ripening. Is it the influence of the world? But they were *intended* to live in the world: and education,—a christian education,—has done nothing, if it has not prepared them for their worldly course. There must be a canker at the root of our teaching: let us search it out.

How have we ourselves acted out the great principles of our christian faith, through the period in which we have been engaged in instructing others? Have our children seen and felt that we have been living our-

selves, and educating them, for this world as an *end*, or for this world as preparatory to the next? The question is of vital importance. In the last years of educational life, we teach much more by example than by precept; and at no period of life are young people quicker to understand and discern the realities of things, than in that now before us. They may be schooled and taught that so and so is right,—that we *ought* to do this, and believe that, and love the other; and their assent to all this may be honestly given; but the mere abstract truth of each proposition makes no lodgment in their minds, until it has been embodied by some fact in the life and practice of those around them, or unless it is tested by their habitual course of action.

I venture to give an illustration of what I mean from some early remembrances. I was often the companion of one very dear to me, while she watched, during a long and distressing illness which offered little hope of recovery, the person nearest and dearest to her. Week after week, and month after month elapsed, during all which time no trace of weariness, of impatience, or of despondency, passed over her, though distracting worldly cares, and the duties connected with a large family circle, entered into the trial. The habitual serenity and even cheerfulness of her manner, awakened my attention and surprise, so that I really questioned with myself, whether she loved the object of her solicitude as much as I had supposed; though the tenderness of her nature seemed to forbid the doubt. One day I entered softly into the sick chamber, and found her absent; after waiting a little while, I perceived the door of the dress-

ing-room ajar; I stole up to it, and looked through the aperture; she was upon her knees, tears were on her cheeks, but her attention was so absorbed in prayer that she did not perceive me. I hastily closed the door, and resumed my place in the sick room. Now, as by a flash of lightning, the whole thing was made clear to me; and when she returned to her charge, calm and cheerful as usual, I no longer wondered, for I felt myself in possession of her secret. And afterwards, on noticing a passage marked in her prayer-book, "Oh tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong and He shall comfort thine heart, and put thou thy trust in the Lord," I thought—Yes, people *may* do this, for she does it. This certainty of her convictions made a lasting impression on my mind, young as I was when it took place.

"If religion be only an instrument in education," says Madame de Saussure, in her admirable Strictures, "it is a very imperfect one." And this remark, I think, explains in part, the source of the failure we complain of. "For," as she adds, "if God's revealed will supply us with *teaching* only, while the world supplies us with *motives*, the teaching and the motives must, in some part of our course,—and in none more likely than on our entrance into it,—be at variance with, and perplex each other;" and, I would add, not unfrequently leave a practical infidelity connected with that teaching in our minds.

We often hear such remarks as these:—"Mr. and Mrs. B. have brought up their children on the strictest religious principles; yet they have turned out just like many other people who have had no such advantages,

viz. selfish and worldly." And this charge is often made against high religious professors. The truth is, we cannot make religious teaching square with worldly ends. If I speak of the things of God to my children, yet seek for them such worldly advantages as are incompatible with these things, or seek for these advantages, when *not* incompatible, by means inconsistent with my teaching,—what will be the thoughts of the young people under my care? They will perceive, that though I talk of "faith and obedience," and of "the great gift of God," with which these principles are connected, they are not the things which stood first in my own heart. My teaching then will have proved worse than fruitless; for it will have made speculative belief seem consistent with practical unbelief, a danger which haunts us through life, and which may be often traced to the negative influence of example—to a want of faith in the faith of our early christian teachers. "What do they do, in consequence of that faith, besides going to church, saying their prayers, and telling us to renounce the world?"—our children may ask.

Noah did not only *preach* righteousness to the world and to his children, but "he built the Ark;" and it saved him and his children alive.

CHAPTER IV.

HOME INFLUENCES.

WHEN the season of education is over, and our children are not only emancipated from school, and school-room restraints, but take their position in their father's house, as members also of society, a new set of duties devolves on the parents, viz. to regulate their home life, and their connections with the world, in reference to this change of circumstances.

Home, as far as our sons are concerned, will, it is probable, be henceforth no tarrying-place; but if it has been made what we have attempted to describe, it must necessarily continue for some time to exercise a wholesome influence over them; and their occasional residence in an atmosphere so pure and genial, cannot fail to renew and refresh their moral tastes, at a period when the world's contact, and its manifold temptations, are most likely to have been spreading a baneful influence over their nature.

Wise parents will render the restraints of home as few and as easy as are compatible with its good order, and with the maintenance of that respect to home and its inmates, which it is never safe to allow the violation of for the sake of any ulterior advantage. Over their connections with the world, their parents can exercise

little direct influence, and impose few restraints on these, excepting indeed with regard to the class of acquaintance which they seek to introduce into their father's house, and to their sisters. With sisters, the connection, at this period of a young man's life, is a very happy and useful one. An unfettered intercourse between individuals of the two sexes, and nearly similar ages, can scarcely fail to be beneficial to both parties; and it is usually at this season of life, that those home friendships are cemented, which seem destined to end only with life itself.

But in respect of home, and its influences, a regard for the welfare of our daughters must necessarily involve more important considerations. If they have been well-educated, and the reins of discipline have been relaxed gradually, they will perhaps find little difference in the actual course of their home life, after the school-room duties are at an end; though much, in their own feelings towards it. They are now (or should be) free members of the little community in which they have been brought up; and every thing should be done to secure to them the unrestrained enjoyment of a happy home. The disposal of themselves, their time, their domestic recreations, their personal charities and expenditure, the internal arrangement of their apartments,—under as few restraints as are compatible with the circumstances of their father's household, and the necessary regulations of a well-ordered community,—should be secured to them, and left to the guidance of their own judgment and conscience. A few restrictions will still necessarily remain; and these, chiefly connected with their recreations; which must,—especially their social recreations,—be in some

measure regulated and influenced by the judgment and conscience,—often perhaps, by the prejudices,—of those they live with. Parents and guardians dare not sanction what they think wrong or inexpedient, even under the great temptation of giving pleasure to those they love; since we too are bound by a moral and religious responsibility, which ceases only with our existence.

To promote the enjoyments of our children is indeed often a subject of anxiety to conscientious parents and friends, for it is connected in our minds with many difficulties; and cannot always be reconciled with higher duties towards the beloved objects. On the one hand, we cannot impart that knowledge of life, which would justify us in the eyes of our daughters for some restraints on their pleasures; on the other, we can scarcely expect from their ripened judgments, that trust in ours which was natural to them in childhood; for we must be aware that forgetfulness of our own youth, or prejudices engendered by the peculiar circumstances of our lives, are liable to warp our opinions, while their fresh and vigorous minds may render them, in some respects, more capable of decision than ourselves. It may well be so. But still our path before us is plain; and we can only keep it, in following out what our own judgment and our own conscience,—preserved as clear as possible from all selfish considerations,—sets before us as right.

Under the head of private recreation, the subject of books comes before us. The modern literature of the present day supplies a delightful form of amusement: but that portion of it, so fascinating to young people,

novels and romances, is, it must be acknowledged, fraught with evil influences; and the taste and judgment of a parent, or elder friend, is nowhere more important than in the selection. For though a young woman's own pure moral taste would doubtless lead her to reject such as presented unpleasant scenes, or seemed to possess a bad tendency, yet she might waste much time, and carry away many unprofitable remembrances, before she could discover faults which would strike an older and more experienced person at a glance.

Novel-reading is likely to be injurious to young people, both in respect of its quality and of its quantity. If a novel is defective in respect of quality, it is better not to read it at all; but in respect of the quantity, the best novels are hurtful if the mind leans upon them for its daily support. Sweetmeats make good sauce, but bad sustenance. It is to be lamented indeed that the present age affords such a facility and temptation to idle reading, in the vast number of novel periodicals and other light and worthless literature of some interest poured forth in the cheapest form, and pledging one to a continued course of such reading. The quantity of time consumed by young *men* in this way, is not I believe at all less than that which young women are supposed to devote to it; but the necessary calls to severer labours have, in the case of men, a tendency to neutralize the evil. In young women the common result of excessive novel-reading is, that the reader,—if young and susceptible, and especially if (as is so commonly the case) her education has been faulty—becomes, to her own mind, successively, the heroine of each tale she reads,

and unconsciously brings into real life the feelings and sentiments she has imbibed from fiction. That it is an unjust and false estimate of life which she has thus obtained, the unfortunate novel-reader often does not discover, until it has involved her in grievous but perhaps wholesome disappointments.

"L'influence des romans," says Madame de Saussure, "a été si puissante, que la vie réelle les a imité beaucoup plus, qu'ils n'ont imité la vie réelle ; le point de vue est faux de tout manière. Les hommes paraissent dans les fictions plus sensibles qu'ils ne le sont, et l'amour y joue un rôle plus grand qu'il ne fait dans ce monde. Ceux de Walter Scott, cependant, montrent la nature humaine sous un jour plus juste, et une seule passion n'y eclipse pas toutes les autres. Ainsi, sont ils les moins dangereux de tous les romans."

Doubtless Sir Walter Scott conferred a great benefit on society, especially on the youthful part of it, in creating for them, both a harmless pleasure, and also one which awakens some of the generous and amiable sympathies of our kind, in behalf, not only of the beautiful, and high-born, and heroic, but for the ruder and more homely developments of human nature.

The indiscriminate indulgence of the novel-reading propensity, extending itself,—along with the diffusion of other knowledge,—through every grade of society,—has become a serious evil of the present day; since it forms the principal recreation of a large class of young persons who have no one to guide their choice, and are therefore at the mercy of the circulating library. It is to be wished that novelists were more awake to the

heavy responsibility under which they are placed, and the blame that must attach to those who present scenes and images to the minds of the young and pure, which the actual experience of their lives could not have brought before them.

There is indeed a class of English novels, of talent and literary merit, whose object it seems to inculcate principles and precepts of religion and virtue, and whose moral and characters are drawn out with express reference to these principles, yet which lie open to the charge of forcing scenes and incidents on the attention, which cannot but shock and pain any pure mind, and which in relating a similar story *viva voce*, the narrator himself * would have alluded to in a very different way. It is vain to say that these ideas are only brought forward to be reprobated; reprobation makes no amends for their introduction into the mind at all, since familiarity with any passion or impression, does, as Butler has well remarked, "tend to weaken that impression."

Physicians are less afraid of diseases, and sailors of drowning, than other men; is it not then to be feared and expected, that scenes and ideas like those I allude to, painted with living colours, and brought frequently before the young mind, may weaken the disgust and horror with which they are calculated to inspire it? Or if not so, may they not at least cling unpleasantly and unprofitably to the imagination, and not least unprofitably—where they are supposed to be least injurious,—to the imaginations of young men? "Let it not be once

* The remark applies, I fear equally, to novelists of the other sex.

named among you, as becometh saints," (Christians,) was St. Paul's exhortation to the members of one of the early churches.

The novels of the French school offer, generally speaking, a far more dangerous recreation to young people. With all the fascinations of style that can adorn a story, and often with a delineation of the most attractive and amiable qualities, they not only imply no recognition of the restraints of morality or religion, but their favourite characters act, and glory in acting, in direct opposition to both. And yet these tales are devoured by the higher classes of society; even by many among them who freely own their defects. One hears married women, in particular, say, "I don't deny that there are shocking things in these books; indeed I would not recommend them to young folks;" (the speaker being herself perhaps not many years senior to the girls she is addressing) "but then they are so captivating: one can't help reading them when they fall in one's way," &c. Now what impression must this make on the minds of young women, but that marriage lowers the moral taste, and justifies the indulgence of a craving for attractive fictions, without regard to the scenes they introduce, or to the principles they inculcate? Others will deny that there is any harm in such publications, or will except from the general censure, certain favourites of their own,—declaring *e. g.* that the most fastidious critic can find nothing to object to, in Eugene Sue's 'Juif Errant'; or declaring that if there are some wrong notions and descriptions in this novel, there are *a great many good ones;* forgetting, that it is this very mixture of good

which makes the evil more insidious. Poison is most surely administered, by mixing the deadly substance in some wholesome food; and when young readers are charmed with an eloquent eulogium on benevolence, or generosity, or self-denial, they may chance not to perceive that these virtues are enlisted on the side of infidelity or immorality. Modern infidelity too is very insidious; for it frequently assumes, in conformity with the improved taste of the times, the drapery of christian morality,—partly for the sake of ornament, and to conceal from careless eyes the darkness and deformity which lurks beneath,—partly because the real beauty of the christian character is sometimes felt by men of taste, even when they are not disposed to embrace christian truth, or to admit practically the doctrines and morals which are founded on it. Hence its introduction into literature of this description; and hence the young and inexperienced learn to connect it with qualities the most an antidote to its spirit. This misappropriation of Christianity is to be found in Eugene Sue's most popular work, 'Le Juif Errant'; which it may be useful to notice, because, having unfortunately become, by means of translation, and under a very cheap form, part of our own popular literature, it reaches a class of readers who would otherwise have been safe from its influence, and also, because, from its *first* volumes being unexceptionable, many are induced to take it in, who are usually choice in their selection of such kind of reading.

This novel indeed is truly insidious; for it leads us through two or three small volumes, before it betrays any thing inconsistent with the most perfect purity; and

some of the characters are evidently touched up from christian sources. But in the progress of the story, the reader finds virtue and vice so interwoven, that it is evident the writer at least had lost his power of distinguishing them. He has given us types of his *beau idéal* of the female sex, embodied in two gracefully and distinctively drawn female characters, the one taken from high life, the other from low life in Paris. In the first he has made generosity, philanthropy, and even (so called) purity of mind, consistent with the most luxurious habits of refined sensualism; and in the second, patience, self-denial, modesty and humility, with the loosest principles of morality; while an utter contempt of the marriage-tie, and approbation of suicide, are manifested by both characters, as well as in those portions of the work which express the author's own opinions.

Such are the books which come to us from the French press, and which too soon take an English form. George Sands' works have also recently found an English, and a *female* translator!

On the subject of social recreations in connection with young people, enough has been said in the former part of this volume. But their relation to the responsibilities of parents,—especially of a mother,—seems to call for allusion to them in this place; especially as the world, it is well known, gives them a very prominent position among maternal duties. Yet the parents' course must be shaped according to the view which her (or his) conscientious judgment takes on the subject of recreation. If she considers that not only a life of pleasure, but that any por-

tion of a life whose business is pleasure, or whose pleasures are liable to become cares, is unsuited to, and inconsistent with the higher calling of her daughters,—if she thinks that some of the recreations of the world invade the rights of her neighbours, or that they involve other evil tendencies, then it may be supposed, that she will either chuse from among them such as are unexceptionable in her eyes, or withdraw her daughters altogether from their influence: as a christian parent, she dares not hesitate on such a point. Yet it must be acknowledged, that either of these decisions involves her in numberless difficulties; and more especially if she does *not* consider the amusements of the world *in themselves* sinful. For, any decision founded on a conviction of their intrinsic sinfulness, would, at the present day, be generally recognized and respected by persons utterly at variance with her in these views; nor would her daughters, unless very unamiable, desire that she should do this violence to her conscience for their sakes. But if she sees sin and danger only in the *circumstances* connected with these amusements, then, persons who cannot take the same view, very naturally attribute her conduct to fastidiousness, or selfish disregard of the pleasures of others; and her daughters, wanting that experience which might lead them to the same convictions, must possess good sense and good principle, if they are fond of pleasure, to acquiesce in a right spirit with her decisions; and if they do not thus acquiesce, then they may seem,—for the case should be stated fairly,—to be placed in a more dangerous position with regard to the world, than those who do partake in its ordinary pleasures.

A lady, among numbers who have said similar things, remarked to me once, that she was worn out by incessant going to balls; that since her daughter came out, during the ball-going season, she was never able to breakfast with her husband. She discussed the weariness of having to go out at the close of the evening when the rest of her family were going to their rest, &c. I asked why she submitted to a life which evidently told upon her own health and spirits, and on the comfort of her family. "Oh, of course E. expects me to go out with her." "But you might go out less." "I might; but my daughter would be discontented and uncomfortable; the more young people go out, the more they wish to go out; it is natural, but I trust she will get tired of it in a few seasons." I was not cruel enough to suggest that her younger daughters might by that time succeed to the same desires. These are certainly difficulties which stand in the way of parents. But one may venture to think, that young people brought up on the highest principles, in whose minds the subject of recreation has taken its proper place, who feel their christian responsibilities, and their position in this world, in its connection with that which is to come,—will never feel such a craving after worldly pleasures, as must render their lives less happy than we could desire; but that their own tastes and feelings, undistorted by the influence of early habit, will make this moderate view of the subject of recreation their own; and this supposition accords with general experience.

It is probable, indeed, that young people in such a position, do actually possess many more real enjoyments,

than those who appear to be living for little else than pleasure; since some of the simplest recreations, and most unambitious social gatherings, will be more thoroughly enjoyed by them, because they will be enjoyed apart from the cares, which too often cast a shade on the more dazzling and elaborate enjoyments of their young companions. It is right, indeed, that we should endeavour to secure to our daughters safe and wholesome pleasures; and there are, through the beneficent arrangements of Him who made us, no lack of these. The stores of nature lie open to them,—the arts,—which may be considered the most innocent luxuries of life, will furnish numerous recreations, and form the nucleus of social gatherings among young people of both sexes, whose tastes have not been spoiled by the introduction, into their pleasures, of elements essentially foreign to the nature of pure recreation.

Still, whatever be the convictions of parents on this subject, should a craving for the pleasures of the world exist in the minds of our daughters, after the first two or three years of their grown-up life are over, it may seem to belong to the freedom we have claimed for them, and to the exercise of their personal responsibility, that they be left at liberty, should opportunity offer, to act, in respect of this point, upon their own judgments, provided this can take place without violation of the habits of the paternal household; since every young woman must, after all, either chuse her own path in life, or make that which is chosen for her, her own, by the acquiescence of her private judgment.

But even under the modified and temperate use of

the social amusements which we have supposed, much of our daughters' healthful enjoyment of them will depend on their previous training. How then has this training fitted them to take their place in society, to give pleasure, and to receive it? If well-informed and accomplished, they will be open to many sources of enjoyment, connected with the arts and literature of their own and other countries, and other sources will doubtless arise to them out of the conversation of agreeable and intelligent people; while they will be no less capable of enjoying the lighter and healthful amusements of youth, which happen to fall in their way.

Much stress has been laid on the deference due by young people to the society they belong to; that they should enter the world *i. e.* with proper notions of its claims and observances; and it is true that the customs of society should, up to a certain point, be respected by them; for, as Madame de Saussure justly observes, their happy innocence, and their lively and enthusiastic minds, require some slight external control, and the very fear of giving offence is a safeguard against unknown dangers, to which their inexperience might expose them. But there is a much greater evil to be apprehended, if the opinions and usages of the world have been introduced into their minds as motives or principles of action.

Enough perhaps has been said elsewhere on this class of motives; but one principle connected with them—the desire of pleasing,—requires a little more attention. This propensity, harmless in itself, and doubtless answering some useful purpose in our organization, requires, in

its healthy state, no more stimulus, than does the desire of taking food in a person of good appetite; repletion, from its too great activity, being the only evil result to be dreaded. But another,—in truth very different, though seemingly similar—the love of giving pleasure, may be indulged without fear. The former, though connected with others, is eminently egotistical; the latter truly social. A young woman, in whom benevolence—the love of giving pleasure—is strong, forgets herself in others; she in whom the love of pleasing is the active principle, sees herself in every one. Whether she walks across a room, talks, laughs, or sighs, she is herself the reflected object of every act and emotion; and her pleasures depend upon the effect she produces, or supposes herself to produce, on others. This state is thoroughly unhealthy; as injurious to the mind as to the manners; and destructive of the refreshing influence of social pleasures. She, on the contrary, whose desire of pleasing is under due control, subordinate *i. e.* to the desire of giving pleasure, and who is therefore occupied with others rather than herself, is really in the best position for the full and tranquil enjoyment of the sources of amusement which lie open to her, undisturbed by the mortifications of disappointed vanity, or by its more dangerous satisfactions.

If such are the healthful influences under which our daughters take their position in society, we may hope that they will find, in their moderate intercourse with it, but few *unnatural* hindrances to the course which as Christians they must desire to lead. I say *unnatural* hindrances, because I am aware that there are hindrances

everywhere, at home and abroad, by the paternal fireside and in solitary musings, to the free course of God's grace. And such hindrances, no care of ours can control; for they lie in the heart itself; though they take their definite form, from the duties or pleasures in which we are engaged. But, if we shall have cleared our children's path of some of those hindrances, which, because they are not necessarily connected with their social or domestic life, I have called *unnatural*, we shall at least have discharged one portion of our duty towards them; the last,—if we except the silent influence of example—remaining to us as parents. It is as friends that we shall henceforth watch their progress through the remaining years of our own life.

CHAPTER V.

PRIVATE INFLUENCES ON SOCIETY.

THE use and importance to society of combined efforts, —and in particular, of those associations for religious purposes and for the general advancement and happiness of mankind, which belong to this age and nation,—have been fully recognized in the first portion of this volume. I propose to close this second part with some remarks on private influences,—on the influence, viz. of individuals and individual households on that section of the world with which they are immediately connected.

Of all private influences, we should expect that of the clergy to be most effective, steady, and beneficial, not merely in their public capacity,—which does not belong to the present subject,—but in their private relations with society. Connected both with the higher and middling ranks, they form, owing to their peculiar position, a link between all classes of the community; and scattered as they are, throughout the population, they and their households are often centres of civilization in remote and unfrequented districts. The wife (or sister) and daughters of a clergyman must necessarily possess considerable influence, not only over the social habits of their neighbours, but in the support of charities, in the conduct of societies, and in the maintenance of schools.

Often the only permanent residents of the class of gentry —it must fall to them to carry out the benevolent schemes of others, whose circumstances involve a less constant residence;—best situated for knowing the characters, the wants, and capabilities of their poorer brethren,—the inhabitants of the neighbourhood will naturally look to the clergyman's family,—if they be persons whose judgment can be relied on,—to assist their own charitable views. But to the clergyman himself, the little world around him must look for other aids and influences. We will suppose him a man of no section or party in Church or State, but one in whom the good and just of all parties may find support; the suffering, sympathy; and the erring, gentle, but firm rebuke. Some of us know such men; and though their own course does not always run smoothly,—through the intervention of evil tongues, jealous spirits, and idle busy-bodies,—the influence of their lives, (a comment on their preaching) is secretly imbibed by those around them.

The clergyman's wife has, indeed, no less than her husband, many difficulties to contend with, arising out of the vulgar prejudices and confined notions of those she has to deal with, both rich and poor, noble and lowly born. Steady independence of mind, together with ready sympathies, should be hers; but above all, that genuine fruit of Christian faith, singleness of heart, and patient forbearance towards all around her. No views for her husband's advancement, or for the establishment of her family, will be allowed to disturb her line of conduct, and perplex her connections with the world around her; a certain simplicity and elegance,

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devoid of all pretension, and consistent both with her husband's position, and the economy which his limited resources will usually oblige her to adopt, will be preserved in her domestic arrangements. I have seen such households maintained with slender means; and they cannot fail to have a beneficial effect on the habits of those around her. To those above her, she may give evidence, that refinement and good taste are not necessarily connected with wealth and greatness, or inconsistent with homely virtues; to those below her, that the hints she ventures to give to others, about self-denial and good order, are at least carried out in her own person and household. In alluding to some of the benefits which the influence of a well-ordered clergyman's family is capable of conferring on its neighbourhood, we must acknowledge that experience sometimes furnishes a reverse of this picture *in all its features*; that there are clergymen's families, where, besides other inconsistencies, besides pretension, want of economy, and want of order, there exists an arrogant spirit of interference in the ways and affairs of their neighbours, both poor and rich, which is very unbecoming and oppressive; and also a habit of gossiping, which, if it does not *originate* evil speaking, lends the surest *circulation* to it.

In reverting to other private influences, and especially to those connected with the poor, we are reminded of a class among the gentry, less numerous than of old, but still far from extinct,—the Lady Bountifuls of former days,—whose connection with the labouring classes does not seem calculated to promote their independence or advancement; benevolent persons, who seem to regard

poverty as an essential quality, rather than as an accident; and who, therefore, considering the poor as an inferior race of creatures, think for them, act for them,—(thus cherishing their supposed incapability of thinking or acting for themselves,)—expect unbounded submission from them, and in return for this submission, give plenty of broth and blankets. If we wish to raise our poorer neighbours to an enjoyment of their share of the blessings of independence, and enable them to partake in the general advance of civilization, we must not treat them like children; we must not force them (I mean by setting a bounty on acquiescence) to act, think, and amuse themselves as *we* think best. We must not keep them in leading-strings, as the Jesuits did the Paraguay Indians. An intelligent poor man, if we can induce him to think out his own ill-defined notions, and use his own experience, can usually judge of his own affairs better than we can. Our superior information, and more cultivated judgment, may indeed be a valuable aid, and therefore our advice may be most important to his best interests; but it does not seem just that it should be forced upon him; and especially it does not seem consistent with a proper sense of our mutual relations, that we should, *as his benefactors*, assume, in our way of speaking on subjects which concern him alone, that tone of authority, which in other relations of life would be considered, on that very account, unbecoming.

I have alluded to a spirit of interference in the affairs of others, as an evil to be deprecated, and as destructive of those good and safe influences which may be so usefully exerted over each other; nowhere is it to be de-

precated more, than in the conduct of some religious and benevolent people of both sexes, in their connections with the poor; I have known very charitable people (in the sense of almsgiving) enter their dwellings in season and out of season, disturbing the poor man at his humble meal without the slightest apology, and often reproving him, because it did not consist with their ideas of suitableness or economy. I have known earnest and pious ladies, not altogether so liberal of money, thrust religious tracts and counsel on those who, suffering under the pressure of bodily wants, were ill-disposed to receive them, and to whom they had never appeared but in the self-assumed character of spiritual reprovers;—persons, who are anxious to be doing, and really zealous in the cause of religion, but who have no instinctive sympathies with the feelings of others, and whose judgement does not direct them how to drop a word in season. But this is not the way to win souls; and people who know the poor, are aware how these things are felt, for they have heard their low, and, I must think, patient murmurs, on this account.

Among the tendencies very much developed in this present age, I have heard noticed, by one whose judgment must ever give his opinions weight, an inclination among private individuals of no talent or consideration in society, to throw themselves into public affairs, and become directors of others. It is a consequence, probably, of the rapid diffusion of knowledge,—of knowledge rather various than profound, which leading a number of people to think who never thought before, awakens them to a sudden sense, and consequent over-estimate

of their own powers. Hence (it has been also remarked) "persons of all classes, ages, and attainments, rush forward to offer advice, and take the management of questions calculated to perplex the ablest and most experienced judgments, and demanding both mature reflection and accurate knowledge. Each man has his remedy for evils which he has not yet fathomed, and if he have sufficient influence, not unfrequently involves his neighbourhood in some rickety scheme of reform which he has built on an unsound foundation." Meanwhile, he has not perhaps clearly defined his own domestic duties; his children are ill-trained, his business in arrears, and his household neglected. Yet the conduct and happiness of those who eat their bread beneath our roof, is no trifling subject of responsibility. He has not even had time to make up his mind on many important subjects connected with these;—for example, on the duty or non-duty, the advantages or disadvantages, of domestic worship.

But we have approached a subject, which affords, to those who can look back some twenty-five years ago, a very marked and cheering sign of advancement in the religious convictions, and consequent habits of the present age. There are now few well-ordered families who do not desire to avail themselves of the advantages of domestic worship, at least once in the day; though there are, of course, differences of opinion on the best mode of doing this; nor would it perhaps be desirable to see one unvarying mode adopted, both because it seems to belong especially to the head of each family, to conduct the external form of his domestic worship in accordance

with the peculiar circumstances of his household; and because it is likely that the more people's minds are roused to think on the subject, the more effectually will they be led to consider, in connection with it, the benefit of those around them.

It is to be regretted that evening worship seems still beset with difficulties, even to some apparently religious and thoughtful minds. Yet the objection urged does not appear consistent with the weight and importance of the subject; viz. that our recreations, our social recreations, (supposed to be under the control of business-hours,) take place at a period which makes it impossible to close the day in domestic prayer! This sounds strange, it must be acknowledged. Domestic worship is, as regarding ourselves, a privilege, inasmuch as it is a means of grace;—for to social worship is annexed a blessing; it is also, as regards our families, an act so becoming our several relations with each other, and our common relation to our Father in heaven, that no one who thinks earnestly on the subject, would, one might suppose, willingly disregard it. What a bond of union it forms between the members of a family! Twice in the day we meet,—not as children and parents, brothers and sisters, servants and masters, after the flesh; but as children and servants of God—redeemed by Christ; we meet too at night, it seems to me, with peculiar grace, to repair towards each other, any wrong or injustice committed, through infirmity of temper, or selfishness, or resentment, in the course of the day, and mentally to exchange forgiveness in our Lord's own words, "Forgive us"—"as we forgive them."

Are these then the purposes for which we *would* meet in prayer, if (we say) the hours of recreation made it possible? But *which* would it seem most decorous to bend to the other, our christian privileges, or our worldly amusements? and if neither can be made to give way, which should we resign?

It seems impossible that a doubt on the subject can long continue to exist; but that the hours of recreation will take (ere long) their proper place in our lives; and that we shall find not a few, among the class which should be foremost in setting an example, ready to unite in spirit with very many of their fellow-christians, whose private life is unknown to them, in declaring not theoretically, but practically, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Among the improved private influences of the present day, I must not forget to mention that of women, on the spirit of Party; formerly exercised in a way most injurious to the private charities of life; where the gossiping,—I fear I may say, the slanderous—tendencies of our nature, were *enlisted in the service* of a favourite cause, or party, by many persons who would have scorned to originate slanderous tales. That the excitement of party-spirit, which belongs especially to periods of accelerated progress and political activity in a free and populous State, should have been soothed and softened down by the influence of that superior intelligence and refinement which belongs to women of all classes in the present age, is a subject of agreeable reflection; especially when it is admitted, that this diminution of what

may be called the *private* spirit of party, has taken place along with a very general growth in *public* spirit among them, and an increased capability of recommending and communicating their sympathies.

Besides the various private influences which have been mentioned, there is a most important influence, which each person necessarily exercises, in respect of those connected with him in his own profession or calling. It is one kind of merit for a man to discharge the duties of his profession honourably and wisely,—and a merit which the world is not backward in acknowledging; but it is another to use beneficially the influence which that profession lends him over its members,—an influence proportioned of course to the position which he holds in it: for every one knows how easily, for instance, prejudices may be fostered, and the cause of physical and moral and religious truth injured, or at least its progress of development arrested, among his brethren, by the narrow or selfish views of any one leading member of a profession.

But the influences which we exercise over those who are in any way dependent on us are manifold. The landed proprietor, the manufacturer, the merchant, the military and naval officer, and the tradesman, are all involved in such a responsibility. A few individual examples (if it were not invidious) might be given, of the benefit resulting to mankind, from a wise and good use of this influence; where the landlord's character may be traced through his tenantry; where the wisdom and benevolence of the manufacturer extends its power over the condition, physical, moral, and religious, of thousands of his operatives;—where the crew of a vessel is controlled

and rendered amenable to religious and moral impressions, through the personal influence of the captain who commands her;—where the state of a garrison or a regiment has been referred to the personal character of the officers in command;—where the merchant has given the tone of his own habits to the persons connected with him in trade;—and finally, even in a class who seem to have advanced in luxury and external refinement more than in general cultivation, or the sense of their peculiar responsibilities, we have instances of the most important effects produced by tradesmen in the exertion of their personal influence over the happiness and moral state of those whom they employ*.

CONCLUSION.

THE course of these observations on the actual state of social and domestic life in this age and country, with reference to our responsibilities as members of a com-

* Of two large retail establishments in a city with which I am acquainted, in each of which the numbers employed exceeded two hundred, the one makes no provision for the comfort or the moral and religious condition of the young men belonging to the establishment; huddled together in one or two vast sleeping apartments,—kept up late, and their time so employed that there is no opportunity for self-instruction, or even for the commonest religious observances,—clergymen who have been called in to them in sickness, have found them in the most dreary state of ignorance and recklessness. In the other, all is order, regularity, and attention to the happiness and well-being of those dependent on the proprietor: a lending library has been established for his young men, and he shows the greatest attention to the moral and religious habits of the numbers who are connected with his establishment.

Another example may be given of a large millinery establishment,

munity professing Christianity, must have furnished an answer,—if they have been properly conducted,—to the inquiry with which they were prefaced, viz. how far we are acting out, both in social and in domestic life, the great principles by which we profess to be governed. And the answer seems to be, that though a much higher tone of morals exists among us, and an increased attention to religious ordinances has taken place;—that though it is permitted, and even become the fashion, to show an interest on subjects formerly considered too homely or fanatical to be named in what was called "the best society," and too visionary and quixotic to come under the cognizance of men of the world and men of business,—yet that there is still a reluctance to act out thoroughly, in our social, and even in our private and domestic relations, the great principles by which we profess to be governed.

Such a conclusion is at first sight startling, as well as disappointing. We see large social resources at work, in the vast combinations for religious, moral, and other purposes which belong to our age; and we are naturally led to look for large results on society. But it does not appear to be the plan of Providence, that the progressive regeneration of man,—morally and religiously speaking,—should take place in this way. These great and visible engines are after all no more than so many conductors of individual influences; and therefore it must be through the slower and less acceptable medium

in which the proprietress pays strict attention to the conduct and happiness of her young people; and where the work-room, except on remarkable occasions, is closed at eleven o'clock.

of individual reformation, that the great work may be expected to progress. This is not agreeable to our self-complacency; we naturally desire to see great social efforts crowned by immediate and visible success. Yet, on the other hand, it is a cheering and acceptable thought to the solitary wayfarer, that he who acts up to his own personal calling,—his high calling,—however lowly the path through which he is appointed to follow it out,—that he who seeks divine truth, and is faithful to his own convictions, in his intercourse with others, is assuredly not only working out his own salvation, but influencing the condition of mankind also, for good; and is not merely in a figurative sense, but literally, promoting the extension of Christ's kingdom.

It appears indeed to be a law of our nature, that we *must*, directly or indirectly, affect the destiny of our fellow-creatures; for so mysteriously are we connected, that, from the beggar who converses with his fellow, to the sovereign who influences an empire, no one can, if he would, live for himself alone: he has occupied his place in God's creation, and not merely as an individual life; he has filled it for good or for evil in respect of others, as well as himself. The fact of this mysterious influence,—this law of moral attraction,—may easily be traced through the more lowly and unmarked exposition of it, which the humblest daily life affords: it may be traced through every fault we commit, the consequence of which seldom or never rests with ourselves only; it might be traced,—but it would not be good if it could always be so traced,—through every right and just act which we perform, whether it takes place in the secret

recesses of our own hearts, or has other and more outward manifestations.

The conclusion, then, at which I have supposed it probable that most thoughtful and candid minds will arrive, on consideration of the subject before us, viz. that we are not yet acting out, in our social connections, the principles which we of this nineteenth century profess,—is one, which it may be useful to put before ourselves, in order to keep us humble, in the midst of so many excitements to an undue exaltation of our nature, and of our progress, which the present age of development, mental, moral and physical, seems to afford. There is something indeed very exciting in the external aspect of this present period of our century; and one can scarcely look around at such an expansion of means tending to the happiness and improvement of our species, without rejoicing that the will of Providence has cast our lot along with it. We not only see, in the resources which science has already thrown open to us, new means of moral influence and extensive amelioration of physical evils, but we find ourselves entered on a period which has witnessed the unfolding of three great natural laws dimly discerned, or guessed only at before; whose uses seem conformable to the known wisdom and beneficence of all the other manifestations of Divine power, but whose full developments are perhaps reserved for a more advanced stage of our civilization.

Two very different effects seem to have been produced, in this country at least, by the new and extensive resources which Providence has opened to us; the one viz. tending to *exalt* and *excite* our *self*-confidence, the

other to *depress* our confidence in *God*: the one placing before us His gifts, as evidences of the perfectibility of *our* nature—the other leading us to mistrust the blessings which He has given us, as promising an amelioration of human sorrow and suffering, inconsistent with our present condition, and therefore to be suspected of containing some concealed but deadly evil; or perhaps, of proceeding from the very power of evil itself. These effects are produced especially on a class of minds which seem to shrink habitually from the good gifts of God,—sometimes in sullen and fearful asceticism,—but oftener through an earnest and pious desire of "setting their affection on things above," and a fear, lest God's earthly blessings should chain them to things below. But is it really so? or is it not rather the neglect and misuse of these gifts, that has a tendency to rivet our thoughts to earth? Is it not true, that all the wonders revealed to us through the medium of science, and all that is most useful and beautiful in art, have a natural tendency to connect us with the Author of all good and all beauty, and to fill us with aspirations after that state in which Himself and his works shall be more fully unfolded to us? or are they inconsistent with that revelation which tells indeed of a fallen, but also of a restored nature? Our reason seems to forbid such a conclusion. Should we then abstain from the temperate use of these gifts at stated seasons, simply as an act of self-denial, and as a religious exercise? or does not this self-imposed discipline rather savour of will-worship? God surely knows best, when, and how, to subject us to the discipline of suffering; and our daily,—I may

say hourly—course, appointed by Him, involves sufficient occasions for self-denial, and opportunities (involving some useful end) of resigning his gifts, without imposing on us the necessity of self-inflicted penance. For as it is the *call* or *occasion* which makes such resignation a duty, so it is the *duty* which makes it *our* discipline, and involves the fulfilment of that one great practical demand made upon our faith—prompt and ready obedience to His will.

The right use and appreciation of our Heavenly Father's earthly gifts is indeed no unimportant part of our trial here; but if we could constantly remember *whose* we are, and for what high purposes we are endowed with life, redeemed from its curse, and entrusted with its blessings, our corn, and wine, and oil would become consecrated things; they would not lie open to abuse, and we might partake of them in wise moderation, not with fear or trembling, as though we sat at the table of demons, but as remembering that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

APPENDIX.

Note (A), page 4.

It may be said that in the times of the Puritans this diffusion of religious influence did take place; but it must be acknowledged, that the Puritan movement, though eminently christian in its sources, and involving the most important moral influences, did lend its countenance to a *Jewish* interpretation of some portions of the Christian Scripture, which necessarily influenced the doctrines taught, and favoured principles at variance with the spirit of Christianity: though in individuals,—such, for instance, as Hampden,—the puritan influence seems to have worked out fruits both public and private worthy of its name.

Note (B), page 19.

The age succeeding that of the Puritans shows what effects may be produced by forcing the human mind into an unnatural condition.

See the able Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration, by T. B. Macaulay, in the Edinburgh Review, No. 146.

Note (C), page 48.

"... it is not merely because there is a feast, or be cause friends and neighbours are gathered together, tha Christ cannot therefore be in the midst of us. This alone would not drive Him away; but, oh! consider, with wha ears would He have listened to words of unkindness, of pro faneness or of impurity! With what eyes would he have viewed any intemperance or *revelling*; any such immoderate yielding up of the night to pleasure, that a less portion o the next day can be given to duty and to God!"—*Arnold's Christian Life.*

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